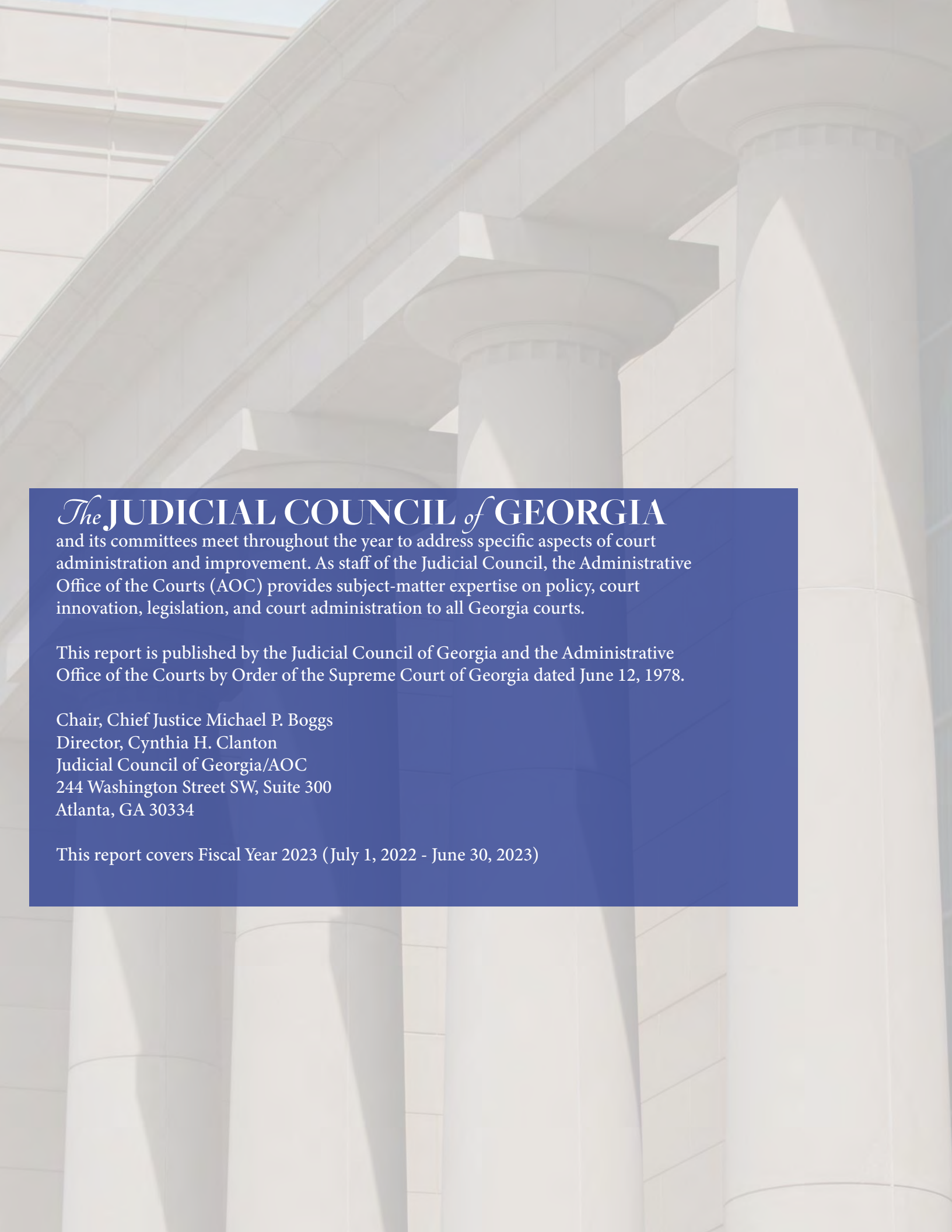




FISCAL YEAR 2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Judicial Council of Georgia /
Administrative Office of the Courts



The JUDICIAL COUNCIL *of* GEORGIA

and its committees meet throughout the year to address specific aspects of court administration and improvement. As staff of the Judicial Council, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) provides subject-matter expertise on policy, court innovation, legislation, and court administration to all Georgia courts.

This report is published by the Judicial Council of Georgia and the Administrative Office of the Courts by Order of the Supreme Court of Georgia dated June 12, 1978.

Chair, Chief Justice Michael P. Boggs
Director, Cynthia H. Clanton
Judicial Council of Georgia/AOC
244 Washington Street SW, Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30334

This report covers Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)

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2023 STATE OF THE JUDICIARY ADDRESS

Chief Justice Michael P. Boggs delivered the State of the Judiciary Address to the legislature on March 8, 2023.

Rising to the Challenge

“Over the past three years of unprecedented challenges, the state’s judiciary has consistently demonstrated its commitment to faithfully serving the citizens of Georgia. We remain strong and resolutely focused on upholding the rule of law and administering justice swiftly, impartially, and independently - foundational tenants of our democracy and our system of justice. As a result, I’m pleased to report that the state of the judiciary is strong.

“This strength is found, however, in the midst of challenges. This past year has been a period of hard work and significant recovery. Courts at every level in Georgia are emerging from the fog of uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic only to be confronted with new challenges presented by crushing caseloads. And, despite the best efforts of our courts to stay as functional as possible, within the bounds of health and law, many courts have accrued a backlog of cases, both criminal and civil, that resulted from the significant delays in proceedings at all levels.”

Case Backlogs Remain

“Fortunately, Governor Kemp has been responsive to the plea from courts across Georgia for help and during his first term, committed \$96 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act funds, to state courts and prosecutors, and another \$14 million to public defenders to address the backlogs of serious violent felony cases. This funding has been used for temporary space, such as renting temporary courtroom space to hold jury selections or large trials; hiring temporary personnel, including assistant prosecutors or senior judges; and upgrading and modernizing courtroom IT equipment (especially for remote proceedings). I’m pleased to report that the funds are helping. After seeing a 36.3 percent increase in serious violent felony cases between 2019 and 2021, circuits receiving ARPA grants reported a nearly 12 percent decrease in these pending cases between the end of 2021 and August 2022. A similar decrease was seen among all felony cases and all cases in general.”



Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission

“In the U.S. one out of every 33 adults is behind bars. You might be surprised to know that in Georgia, that number is also roughly 1 in 33. . . . Nationwide, nearly a fifth of jail admissions involves a person with serious mental illness. We also know that people with mental illness in the U.S. are 10 times more likely to be incarcerated than hospitalized and 19 times more likely to find a bed in the criminal justice system than at a state civil hospital. . . . Thankfully Governor Kemp and all of you have recognized the importance of addressing this problem in creating and supporting the work of the Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission. Your efforts have ensured that Georgia continues to lead the country in thoughtfully and responsibly addressing this issue.”

Access to Justice

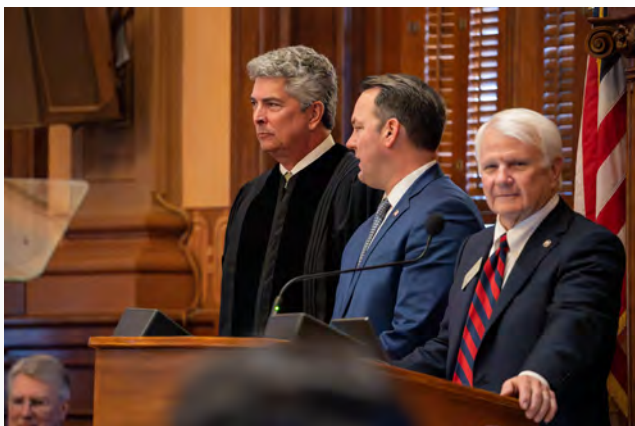
“Another way our court leaders are working hard to ensure that our citizens have meaningful access to justice is through our Judicial Council’s Committee on Court Interpreters which recently completed reviewing and updating the rules that govern court interpreting in our state. As Georgia’s population is becoming increasingly diverse, it is imperative that our state courts continue to be accessible to all.”

Let Justice Be Done Though The Heavens May Fall.

“We are reminded of that phrase every time we hold court. To me, the phrase uniquely encompasses the duty of our Judges.

“Judges are called upon to interpret the law and the Constitution. It is not our duty, nor should it be, to change the law or the constitution. We do not render decisions based on our own desires or bent to our own will. Rather we follow what the statutes and the constitution require. And we solemnly respect the awesome responsibility you all have as legislators to craft and shape our laws. This is the embodiment of the separation of powers. And this is the rule of law.

“However, underpinning the rule of law is the safety of our judges. Our judicial system depends on judges deciding cases without fear, this includes fear for their personal safety or the safety of their families. The Chief Justice of the United States has made court security the centerpiece of his recent annual report, stating, ‘The law requires every judge to swear an oath to perform his or her work without fear or favor, but we must support judges by ensuring their safety. A judicial system cannot and should not live in fear.’ And as Chair of the Judicial Council of Georgia, I want to give a voice to the judges across our state who have an interest in this issue and so judicial security will be an issue of focus as the year progresses.”



DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Fifty years ago, the first members of the Judicial Council of Georgia were sworn in to begin their service as the statewide policy-making body for the judicial branch. There had been fits and starts of a governance body before 1973, but those initial efforts did not keep momentum. It took then-Governor Jimmy Carter, working with our state's judicial leadership like Justice Robert Hall, Judge Jack Adams, Judge Hal Bell, Judge Marcus Calhoun, Justice William Gunter, Judge Walter McMillan, Judge Ernest Tidwell, Judge William Stanley, Judge Kenneth Followill, and Immediate Past State Bar President Sonny Seiler to create an entity (later reconfirmed by the Supreme Court of Georgia in its June 12, 1978, order) that could stand strong and grow for the next 50 years.

Part of that success came from the creation of a support and service agency to the courts in the form of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), which opened its doors in May 1973. In the first Annual Report of 1973, then-AOC Director James Dunlap reports on the agency's first year of service to the Judicial Council of Georgia and, at the end of this letter, he writes a note of thanks to the brand new, dedicated young staff of the AOC. Today, our staff is still mostly young and certainly dedicated to serving the Judicial Council. In fact, this past year, the AOC was awarded the Spirit of Justice Award by the Judicial Section of the State Bar of Georgia in recognition of our work behind the scenes in support of Georgia's judiciary.



Then-Governor Jimmy Carter swearing in the original Judicial Council of Georgia in 1973.



Justice Shawn E. LaGruta and Judge LaTisha Dear Jackson presented the Spirit of Justice Award to the AOC on behalf of the Judicial Section of the State Bar of Georgia.

We have been celebrating our 50th anniversary with the help of our 2023 Judicial Council Fellow, retired Judge Tain Kell. Judge Kell recorded short videos with so many of our current and past leaders about what the Judicial Council means to them. With Judge Kell's assistance, we made a special logo for just this year, we have published all 50 annual reports and sponsored multiple presentations. We are hosting a service event and a wellness panel before the year ends so we can be inspired and well for the next 50 years.



This 50th Annual Report covers our work during Fiscal Year 2023 and also includes a timeline of significant events over the past 50 years. Today's Judicial Council consists of 27 judges representing all classes of court throughout the state; the only non-judge on the Council is the President of the State Bar of Georgia, who serves as a non-voting member and brings the Council's total membership to 28.

We had a successful legislative session in 2023, with the passage of a clean-up bill to 2022's Superior and State Court Appellate Practice Act as well as an increase to the threshold permitting six-person juries in civil cases unique to State Court, led by the Council of State Court Judges and supported by the Judicial Council. The General Assembly also created three new superior court judgeships, based on the recommendation of the Judicial Council. We are grateful to the General Assembly and Governor Kemp for supporting the judiciary's legislative goals this year.

As we close June 2023, we look forward to the continuing leadership from Chief Justice Michael Boggs and Presiding Justice Nels Peterson as we support them in their many roles, including as Chair and Vice Chair of the Judicial Council of Georgia. It is my privilege to serve as the AOC Director and this agency remains in service to the judicial branch for the next 50 years.

With appreciation and respect,

Cynthia H. Clanton
Director
Administrative Office of the Courts



50th Anniversary videos can be found at
<https://youtube.com/judicialcouncilofgeorgia>.

50th ANNIVERSARY



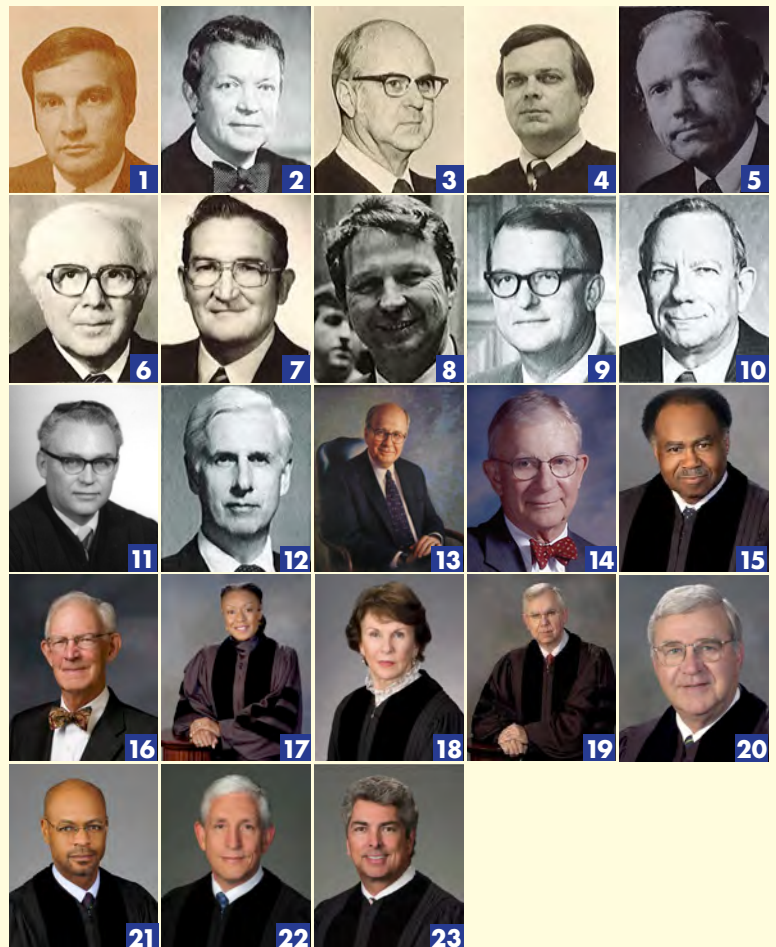
Top row, from left: JC/AOC received Proclamations from the Governor, both chambers of the state legislature, and a congratulatory letter from President Jimmy Carter.

Middle row, from left: A new logo and video series about the Judicial Council, commemorating a room in honor of the agency's first director, James Dunlap, and an and a service event with Habitat for Humanity in September 2023.

Bottom row, from left: JC/AOC hosted an information table and Judge Kell presented on the functions of agency in the plenary session at the State Bar's June annual meeting. Banners and confections celebrating the 50th anniversary

Chairpersons through the years...

- ¹Hon. Sonny Seiler, State Bar President, 1973 (temporary Chair)
- ²Judge Robert H. Hall, Court of Appeals, 1973
- ³Judge Hal Bell, Macon Superior, 1974
- ⁴Judge Kenneth B. Followill, Muscogee State Court, 1975
- ⁵Judge Marion T. Pope, Jr., Blue Ridge Superior, 1976
- ⁶Judge Julian Webb, Court of Appeals, 1977
- ⁷Judge James B. O'Connor, Oconee Superior, 1978
- ⁸Judge Charles L. Weltner, Atlanta Superior, 1979
- ⁹Judge Joseph J. Gaines, Western Superior, 1980
- ¹⁰Judge Andrew J. Whalen, Jr., Griffin Superior, 1981
- ¹¹Chief Justice Harold N. Hill, Jr., Supreme Court, 1982-86
- ¹²Chief Justice Thomas O. Marshall, Supreme Court, 1986-89
- ¹³Chief Justice Harold G. Clarke, Supreme Court, 1990-94
- ¹⁴Chief Justice Willis B. Hunt, Jr., Supreme Court, 1994-95
- ¹⁵Chief Justice Robert Benham, Supreme Court, 1995-01
- ¹⁶Chief Justice Norman S. Fletcher, Supreme Court, 2001-05
- ¹⁷Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears, Supreme Court, 2005-09
- ¹⁸Chief Justice Carol W. Hunstein, Supreme Court, 2009-13
- ¹⁹Chief Justice Hugh P. Thompson, Supreme Court, 2013-16
- ²⁰Chief Justice P. Harris Hines, Supreme Court, 2017-18
- ²¹Chief Justice Harold D. Melton, Supreme Court, 2018-21
- ²²Chief Justice David E. Nahmias, Supreme Court, 2021-22
- ²³Chief Justice Michael P. Boggs, Supreme Court, 2022-present



Significant Events of the Past 50 Years

The General Assembly passed the Georgia Indigent Defense Act and created the Georgia Indigent Defense Council as a separate agency within the judicial branch. The GIDC was set up to administer taxpayer funds to support local indigent defense programs and recommend to the Supreme Court of Georgia guidelines to govern the operation of such programs.

The Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, the first body of its kind in the nation, was created by the Supreme Court of Georgia with the primary charge to enhance professionalism among Georgia's lawyers.

Leah Ward Sears was appointed to the Supreme Court of Georgia by Governor Zell Miller, becoming the first woman and youngest person to sit on Georgia's Supreme Court. Justice Carol Hunstein was appointed to the Supreme Court by Governor Zell Miller, becoming the second woman in history to serve on the Court. She was later re-elected by the voters four times

Leah Ward Sears was elected by her peers as chief justice, becoming the first African American woman to serve as chief justice of any state supreme court in the United States. Carol Hunstein was unanimously elected chief justice in 2009 to replace the court's first-ever female chief justice Leah Ward Sears.

The Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform was created by HB 349 during the 2013 legislative session of the Georgia General Assembly. The Council's charge was to conduct comprehensive reviews of criminal laws, criminal procedure, sentencing laws, adult correctional issues, juvenile justice issues, enhancement of probation and parole supervision, better management of the prison population and of the population in the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice, and other issues related to criminal proceedings.

The Judicial Council launches its 2020-2023 strategic plan. The plan objects to improve citizen experience with Georgia Courts; improve collaborative and planning; promote the wellbeing, health, and integrity of the judiciary; and enhance the professional and ethical image of the judiciary.

1973

The first version of the Judicial Council of Georgia is created by the Georgia General Assembly through Act 178, 1973 Ga. Laws 288, to serve as the administrative policy-making body for Georgia's courts.

1979

1985

The Supreme Court of Georgia adopts the Uniform Superior Court Rules to provide for the speedy, efficient and inexpensive resolution of disputes and prosecutions, which were developed by the Judicial Council.

1989

1990

The Georgia Courts Automation Commission was created by 1990 Resolution Act No. 98; HR 849; Ga. L. 1990, p. 979. to develop and implement a statewide case management system for Georgia's courts.

1992

1993

The Judicial Council forms the Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution through the passage of the Georgia Dispute Resolution Act. The Act created the Commission to promote the use of alternative dispute resolution methods in Georgia's courts.

2005

2012

The Georgia Legislature created the Georgia Accountability Court Program, a significant criminal justice reform initiative established to provide effective alternatives to sentencing for nonviolent offenders and to safely reduce the state's prison population.

2013

2015

The Georgia Legislature and Governor Nathan Deal created the Council of Accountability Court Judges to provide courts with the technical support and critical funding necessary to support the growth of Accountability Courts in Georgia to safely reduce the prison population.

2020

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS (AOC)



Mission

The Judicial Council and AOC lead collaboration on policy across Georgia's courts to improve the administration of justice in Georgia.



Vision

To improve justice in all Georgia courts through collaboration, innovation, and information. As staff to the Judicial Council of Georgia, the Administrative Office of the Courts provides subject-matter expertise on policy, court innovation, legislation, and court administration to the state's trial and appellate courts. The AOC also furnishes a full range of information technology, budget, and financial services at the request of judicial clients.

About the AOC

In addition to staffing all meetings for the Judicial Council and its committees (ad hoc and standing), the AOC provides fiscal, legal, human resource, technology, legislative tracking, research, communication, and liaison services to multiple classes of courts and judicial branch partners.

DIRECTOR'S DIVISION is comprised of Human Resources, Governmental and Trial Court Liaison, General Counsel, and Budget. The Director determines priorities, strategy, and direction of the agency and oversees its divisions.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION provides fiscal services for the Judicial Council, AOC, certain courts, and other judicial branch organizations. Services provided include: payroll administration, budget preparation and management, audit compliance, invoicing, fixed asset management, and management of accounts receivable and payable at the request of judicial clients. The Financial Administration staff also provides budget data to the Governor's Office and General Assembly on behalf of each Judicial Council budgetary unit.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION develops, supports, and enhances automation solutions for all levels of court throughout the State of Georgia. The AOC IT Division offers consulting and research services, provisioning of hardware resources and compliance with legislative mandates as well as keeping up with industry fluctuations and develops, supports and enhances automation projects for all levels of court throughout the State of Georgia.

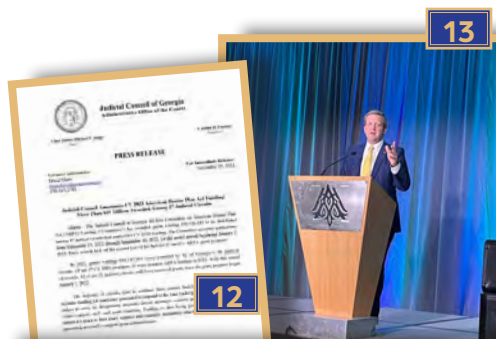
COMMUNICATIONS, CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND THE COURTS DIVISION supports court system initiatives and partnerships that improve outcomes for Georgia's most vulnerable citizens—among them: children in foster care, victims of domestic violence, persons with disabilities who need improved access to the courts, and families seeking child support. It includes staff support to the Georgia Child Support Commission, the Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children, and the Judicial Council Standing Committee on Access to Justice. A combination of state, federal and private funds finance this work. This Division also houses the Communications Department for the entire AOC.

JUDICIAL SERVICES DIVISION is made up of two offices: Research and Data Analysis, and Court Professionals. Through these two offices, this division provides data-driven analysis of the state's trial courts and oversees the policy and regulatory matters of Georgia's court professionals.

FY 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

1. July 18, 2022 – The Investiture of Chief Justice Michael P. Boggs and Presiding Judge Nels S.D. Peterson.
2. July 20, 2022 – Justice Andrew A. Pinson is sworn in to the Supreme Court of Georgia, and Judge Ben Land is sworn in to the Court of Appeals.
3. August 12, 2022 – The Judicial Council meets for a General Session.
4. August 19, 2022 – JC/AOC kicks off its Court Observation Program with a visit to Judge Wade Padgett's courtroom, which provides opportunities for JC/AOC staffers to learn more about court operations.
5. August 22, 2022 – "Minding the Justice Gap," a class series developed in partnership with GSU's Center for Access to Justice and the Judicial Council Standing Committee on A2J premieres the 1st of 5 episodes.
6. September 12, 2022 – Chief Justice Boggs swears in new board members to the Georgia Council of Court Administrators at the Fall Training Conference.
7. September 17, 2022 – Judges from every class of court read Meaningful Tweets in honor of 2022 Constitution Day.
8. September 20, 2022 – Colleagues bid farewell to the first judge for the Georgia State-wide Business Court, Judge Walter Davis, who returned to private practice.
9. September 26, 2022 – Judge Bill Hamrick is sworn in to the Georgia State-wide Business Court.
10. October 13, 2022 – The Board of Court Reporting held a successful Learning Essentials About Professionals seminar with 75 new court reporters.
11. October is Civics Awareness Month; Court of Appeals Judge Ben Land and Superior Court Judge Gil McBride participated by speaking to classes about the judiciary.





12. November 7, 2022 – The ARPA Funding Committee chaired by Chief Justice Boggs convened to consider grant applications for CY2023. Over \$39 million was awarded during this round of funding.

13. November 31, 2022 – Justice Bethel kicks off the Summit 2022: Georgia's Child Welfare Conference.

14. December 15, 2022 – The Board of Court Reporting meets and swears in two new members, Judge Brenda Trammel is also reappointed.

15. January 4, 2023 – JC/AOC A2J Staff Attorney Tabitha Ponder represents Georgia at CSOCJ's A2J meeting.

16. January 17-20, 2023 – The Council of Superior Court Judges held its winter training, which included the JC/AOC's IT division information booth.

17. February 1, 2023 – Georgia participated in World Read Aloud Day. Pictured: Judge Cynthia Adams, Douglas Superior Court, reading to Eastside Elementary.

18. February 1, 2023 – Magistrate Court Judges Day at the State Capitol

19. February 22, 2023 – The State Bar of Georgia President Sally Akins Signature Professionalism CLE featured numerous judges, including Chief Justice Boggs, who gave welcoming remarks.

20. February 2023 – @GACourts celebrated Black History Month with multiple collages featuring the state's black judges in every class of court.

21



21. March 2023 – @GACourts celebrated Women’s History Month with multiple collages featuring the state’s women judges in every class of court.

22. March 2–6, 2023 – Georgia judges participate in Read Across America Week. Pictured: Bartow Chief Magistrate Judge Brandon Bryson.



22

23. March 8, 2023 – Chief Justice Boggs delivers the State of the Judiciary Address to the General Assembly.



23

24. April 21, 2023 – At the Judicial Council’s General Session, the AOC was presented the Spirit of Justice Award from the Judicial Section of the State Bar of Georgia.



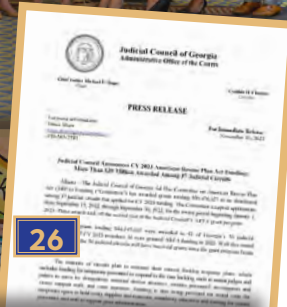
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25. May 1, 2023 – The 2023 Law Day Art Contest winners are celebrated and rewarded for their efforts.



25

26. May 23, 2023 – The JC Ad Hoc Committee on ARPA Funding announces mid-year funding awards.



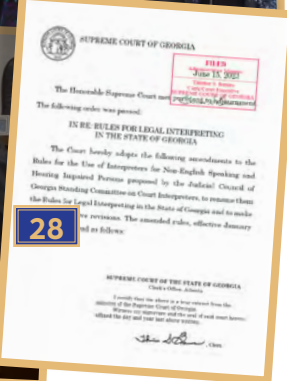
26

27. June 9, 2023 – At the State Bar’s Annual Meeting, the 2023 Hines Award winners are honored in a presentation by the Chair of the Supreme Court of Georgia Committee on Justice for Children, Justice Charlie Bethel.



27

28. June 15, 2023 – The Supreme Court of Georgia adopted the Rules for Legal Interpreting in the State of Georgia submitted by the Judicial Council’s Standing Committee on Court Interpreters.



28

29. June 22, 2023 – The investiture of Chief Judge Amanda H. Mercier and Vice Chief Judge E. Trenton Brown III.



29



BUDGET

2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

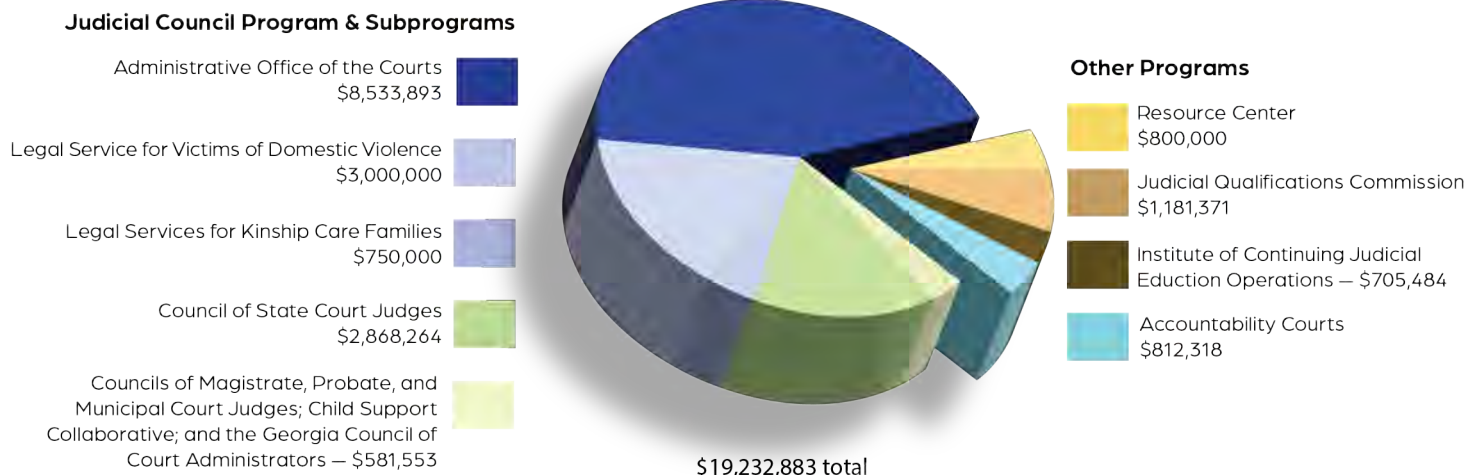
The Amended FY 2023 budget was decreased \$15,693.
The legislature made the following adjustments.

Judicial Council - Administrative Office of the Courts:	
Increase funds for one-time funding for the implementation of the Automated Data Collection Project	\$70,000
Judicial Council – Administrative Office of the Courts:	
Reduce funds for personal services based on actual start dates of new positions	(\$98,245)
Institute of Continuing Judicial Education:	
Increase funds for personnel to true-up the cost-of-living adjustment to account for one additional employee	\$7,300
Increase funds for operations	\$55,252
Judicial Qualifications Commission:	
Reduce one-time funds for legal counsel	(\$50,000)
Total	(\$15,693)

FY 2023 JUDICIAL COUNCIL BUDGET

All the Judicial Council's requests were approved in the Amended Budget; however, due to two true-up items, the total changes represent a \$15,693 reduction to the operating budget for FY23. The Judicial Council's amended State funded budget is \$19,232,883. The Chart below shows how the funding is spread across the Judicial Council's budget programs:

FY 2023 Judicial Council Budget



FY 2020 - 2024 JUDICIAL BRANCH ANNUAL BUDGET (State funds only)

AOC-related Judicial branch budgets over the last 5 years:

AGENCY NAME	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024 *
Court of Appeals	\$22,143,991	\$22,218,240	\$23,463,103	\$27,374,269	\$25,585,681
State-wide Business Court	\$998,374	\$1,500,124	\$1,761,123	\$1,806,747	\$1,833,879
Judicial Council	\$16,673,921	\$14,465,648	\$16,708,976	\$19,232,883	\$20,187,869
Juvenile Courts	\$8,852,430	\$8,703,029	\$8,882,238	\$9,459,249	\$9,501,119
Superior Courts	\$75,264,463	\$72,922,728	\$79,063,120	\$84,828,075	\$88,790,503
Supreme Court	\$14,890,487	\$14,323,949	\$16,261,487	\$19,228,054	\$18,272,137
TOTALS	\$138,823,666	\$134,132,949	\$146,140,047	\$161,929,277	\$164,171,188

FY 2023 JUDICIAL BRANCH BUDGET

The Judicial Branch was appropriated \$161,929,277 for FY 2023 during the 2023 legislative session. The Judicial Branch state appropriation accounts for less than 1% of Georgia's annual operating budget.

FY 2023 State of Georgia Budget



* General budget figures , all other budget figures are from the Amended Budget

LEGISLATION

FY 2023 LEGISLATION

The General Assembly adjourned sine die on Wednesday, March 29, 2023. The following report provides the final status of each item the Judicial Council took a position of support on during the 2023 legislative session.

HB 186 – Petition for Review Clean-Up

Judicial Council

OCGA Title 5, Title 36

Sponsor: Rep. Rob Leverett (R – Elberton); Sen. John Kennedy (R – Macon)

Final Status: **Senate Passed/Adopted, 3/27/23. Final Passage.**

HB 543 – Civil Jury Trials in State Courts Only

Council of State Court Judges

OCGA § 15-12-122

Sponsor: Rep. Matt Reeves (R – Duluth); Sen. Bill Cowsert (R – Athens)

Final Status: **House Agreed to Senate Substitute, 3/29/23. Final Passage.**

The General Assembly also passed legislation creating new superior court judgeships in the following judicial circuits, as recommended by the Judicial Council:

HB 77 – Dougherty Judicial Circuit

HB 243 – Coweta Judicial Circuit

SB 66 – Atlantic Judicial Circuit

**The JUDICIAL COUNCIL of GEORGIA
and Standing Committees**



JUDICIAL COUNCIL of GEORGIA

2022 – 2023 Members

Supreme Court of Georgia



Chief Justice
Michael P. Boggs,
Chair



Presiding Justice
Nels S.D. Peterson,
Vice-Chair

Court of Appeals of Georgia



Chief Judge
Brian M. Rickman



Vice Chief Judge
Amanda H. Mercier

Superior Court



Chief Judge
Arthur L. Smith III,
President, CSCJ



Judge
John E. Morse, Jr.,
President-Elect, CSCJ

JC/AOC



Ms. Cynthia H. Clanton
Director, JC/AOC
Secretary

Georgia State-Wide Business Court



Judge
Bill G. Hamrick III

State Court



Judge
R. Violet Bennett
President, CStCJ



Chief Judge John Kent
Edwards, Jr.,
President-Elect, CStCJ



Judge
D. Jay Stewart,
1st JAD



Judge
Melanie B. Cross, 2nd
JAD

Juvenile Court



Judge
Rendar M. Heard, Jr.,
President, CJCJ



Judge
Warner Kennon
President-Elect, CJCJ

Probate Court



Judge
B. Shawn Rhodes
President, CPCJ



Judge
Danielle McRae
President-Elect,
CPCJ



Judge W. James
Sizemore, Jr.,
3rd JAD



Chief Judge LaTisha
Dear Jackson,
4th JAD

Magistrate Court



Judge
Rebecca J. Pitts
President, CMCJ



Judge
Brandon Bryson
President-Elect, CMCJ

Municipal Court



Judge
JaDawn C. Baker
President, CMuCJ



Chief Judge
Matthew M. McCord
President-Elect,
CMuCJ



Chief Judge
Ural D. Glanville,
5th JAD



Chief Judge
W. Fletcher Sams,
6th JAD



Chief Judge
D. Scott Smith,
7th JAD



Chief Judge
Sarah Wall,
8th JAD

State Bar of Georgia



Ms. Sally Akins
President, State
Bar of Georgia



Chief Judge
R. Timothy Hamil,
9th JAD



Chief Judge
Joseph H. Booth,
10th JAD

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA

Created by Supreme Court Order (Amended May 2016).

All Judicial Council Members serve Ex-officio. The Director of the AOC is the Secretary of the Judicial Council pursuant to its bylaws.

Name	Role	Position
Michael P. Boggs	Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Chair
Nels S.D. Peterson	Presiding Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Vice-Chair
Brian M. Rickman	Chief Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Member
Amanda H. Mercier	Vice-Chief Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Member
William "Bill" Hamrick III	Judge, State-wide Business Court	Member
Arthur L. Smith III	Chief Judge, Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit; President, CSCJ	Member
John E. Morse, Jr.	Judge, Eastern Judicial Circuit; President-Elect, CSCJ	Member
D. Jay Stewart	Judge, Atlantic Judicial Circuit; 1st JAD	Member
Melanie B. Cross	Judge, Tifton Judicial Circuit; 2nd JAD	Member
W. James Sizemore, Jr.	Judge, Southwestern Judicial Circuit; 3rd JAD	Member
LaTisha Dear Jackson	Chief Judge, Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit; 4th JAD	Member
Ural D. Glanville	Chief Judge, Atlanta Judicial Circuit; 5th JAD	Member
W. Fletcher Sams	Chief Judge, Griffin Judicial Circuit; 6th JAD	Member
D. Scott Smith	Chief Judge, Cherokee Judicial Circuit; 7th JAD	Member
Sarah Wall	Chief Judge, Oconee Judicial Circuit; 8th JAD	Member
R. Timothy Hamil	Chief Judge, Gwinnett Judicial Circuit; 9th JAD	Member
Joseph H. Booth	Chief Judge, Piedmont Judicial Circuit; 10th JAD	Member
R. Violet Bennett	Judge, State Court of Wayne County; President, CStCJ	Member
John K. Edwards, Jr.	Chief Judge, State Court of Lowndes County; President-Elect, CStCJ	Member
Render M. Heard, Jr.	Judge, Tifton Circuit Juvenile Court; President, CJCJ	Member
Warner Kennon	Judge, Chattahoochee Circuit Juvenile Court; President-Elect, CJCJ	Member
B. Shawn Rhodes	Judge, Probate Court of Wilcox County; President; CPCJ	Member
Danielle McRae	Judge, Probate Court of Upson County; President-Elect, CPCJ	Member
Rebecca J. Pitts	Judge, Magistrate Court of Butts County; President, CMCJ	Member
Brandon T. Bryson	Judge, Magistrate Court of Bartow County; President-Elect, CMCJ	Member
JaDawnya C. Baker	Judge, Atlanta Municipal Court; President, CMuCJ	Member
Matthew M. McCord	Chief Judge, Stockbridge Municipal Court; President-Elect, CMuCJ	Member
Sally Akins	President, State Bar of Georgia	Nonvoting Member
Cynthia H. Clanton	Director, Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts	Secretary

Judicial Council members as of January 1, 2023

ACCESS TO JUSTICE (A2J)

Staff to Committee: Tabitha Ponder, Esq.

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Verda M. Colvin	Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Chair
Sara L. Doyle	Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Vice Chair
Cynthia C. Adams	Judge, Douglas Judicial Circuit; Accountability Court	Member
William "Bill" P. Adams	Judge (ret.); State Bar of Georgia	Member
Leisa G. Blount	Judge, Probate Court of Dougherty County	Member
V. Sharon Edenfield	Attorney; State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division	Member
Jana Edmondson-Cooper	Judge, Cobb Magistrate Court; Georgia Commission on Interpreters	Member
Belinda Edwards	Judge, Atlanta Judicial Circuit	Member
Terica Redfield Ganzy	President, Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys	Member
William "Bill" Hamrick III	Judge, Georgia State-wide Business Court	Member
Tracy Johnson	Executive Director, Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution	Member
Monica Khant	Georgia Asian Pacific American Bar Association	Member
Mazie Lynn	Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers	Member
B. Shawn Rhodes	Judge, Magistrate Court of Wilcox County	Member
Kimberly C. Sheridan	Gate City Bar Association	Member
Will Simmons	District Court Administrator, 6th District	Member
Jason B. Thompson	Judge, State Court of Fayette County	Member
Maureen Wood	Judge, Juvenile Court of Rockdale County	Member
Nai'ja Bridges	Attorney	Advisor
Clarence Cuthpert	Judge, State Court of Rockdale County	Advisor
LaTisha Dear Jackson	Judge, Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit	Advisor
Karlise Grier	Executive Director, CJCP; Attorney	Advisor
Vicky Ogawa Kimbrell	Attorney	Advisor
Cassandra Kirk	Judge, Fulton Magistrate Court	Advisor
Deonte Mayfield	Staff A2J Policy Analyst	Advisor
Mike Monahan	Attorney	Advisor
Brendan F. Murphy	Judge, Cobb Magistrate Court	Advisor
Tabitha Ponder	Judge, Cobb Magistrate Court; Committee Liaison	Advisor
Jill Travis	Attorney	Advisor
Nicki Vaughan	Attorney	Advisor

MISSION: To improve the public's trust in the judicial branch by promoting meaningful and effective access to courts and fairness for all.

BUDGET

Staff to Committee: Peterson David and Andrew Zoll

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Charlie Bethel	Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Chair
Sara L. Doyle	Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Vice Chair
William "Bill" Hamrick III	Judge, Georgia State-wide Business Court	Member
John E. Morse, Jr.	Judge, Eastern Judicial Circuit; President-Elect, CSCJ	Member
John K. Edwards, Jr.	Chief Judge, State Court of Lowndes County; President-Elect, CStCJ	Member
Warner Kennon	Judge, Chattahoochee Circuit Juvenile Court; President-Elect, CJCJ	Member
Danielle McRae	Judge, Probate Court of Upson County; President-Elect, CPCJ	Member
Brandon T. Bryson	Judge, Magistrate Court of Bartow County; President-Elect, CMCJ	Member
Matthew M. McCord	Chief Judge, Stockbridge Municipal Court; President-Elect, CMuCJ	Member
Nailah McFarlane	Judge, Fayetteville Municipal Court; Budget Chair, CMuCJ	Advisory Member
Maria Golick	Judge, State Court of Cobb County; Budget Chair, CStCJ	Advisory Member
Mike Greene	Judge, Probate Court of Jones County; Budget Chair, CPCJ	Advisory Member
Cynthia Clanton	Director, Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts	Advisory Member
Shannon Weathers	Executive Director, CSCJ	Advisory Member
Bob Bray	Executive Director, CStCJ	Advisory Member
Eric John	Executive Director, CJCJ	Advisory Member
Kevin Holder	Executive Director, CPCJ	Advisory Member
Sharon Reiss	Executive Director, CMaCJ	Advisory Member

MISSION: The Budget Committee handles the initial review of Judicial Council, AOC, and all subprogram budgets and recommends continuation funding and enhancement requests to the Judicial Council for approval.

COURT INTERPRETERS

Staff to Committee: Stephanie Hines

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Carla Wong McMillian	Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Chair
Benjamin A. Land	Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Vice Chair
Angie T. Davis	Clerk, Georgia State-wide Business Court	Member
Kellie Hill	Judge, Cobb Judicial Circuit	Member
C. Jean Bolin	Judge, State Court of McIntosh County	Member
Amber Patterson	Judge, Cobb County Juvenile Court	Member
Sandra Pak	Judge, Probate Court of Gwinnett County	Member
William Brogdon	Judge, Magistrate Court of Gwinnett County	Member
Manchilo Guadie	Attorney, State Bar of Georgia representative	Member
Scott Holcomb	State Representative, District 82	Advisory Member
John Kennedy	State Senator, District 18	Advisory Member
Jana Edmondson-Cooper	Judge, Magistrate Court of Cobb County	Advisory Member
Dax Lopez	Attorney	Advisory Member
Paul Panusky	Attorney	Advisory Member
Michelle Gonzales	Certified Court Interpreter	Advisory Member
Maria Ceballos-Wallis	Certified Court Interpreter	Advisory Member
Christopher Hansard	Court Administrator	Advisory Member

MISSION: To provide interpreter licensing and education services for Georgia courts to ensure the rights of non-English speaking persons in Court and during any court-related events.

COURT REPORTING MATTERS

Staff to Committee: Stephanie Hines

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Amanda H. Mercier	Vice Chief Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Chair
William "Bill" Hamrick III	Judge, Georgia State-wide Business Court	Member
Robert C. McBurney	Judge, Atlanta Judicial Circuit	Member
Kelly J. Brooks	Judge, Waycross Judicial Circuit	Member
John K. Edwards, Jr.	Chief Judge, State Court of Lowndes County	Member
Jane Morrison	Judge, Fulton County State Court	Member
Linnie L. Darden III	Judge, Atlantic Judicial Circuit Juvenile Court	Member
Sheri H. Blevins	Judge, Whitfield County Probate Court	Member
Gregory T. Douds	Judge, Cherokee County Magistrate Court	Member
Lori B. Duff	Judge, Monroe Municipal Court	Member
Alison Toller	Judge, Northeastern Circuit Juvenile Court	Member

MISSION: The Court Reporting Matters Committee acts on behalf of the Judicial Council in handling appeals from decisions of the Board of Court Reporting; reviews and recommends changes to court reporting rules and fee schedules; approves Board of Court Reporting opinions; and recommends candidates for Board of Court Reporting membership.

GRANTS

Staff to Committee: Carole Collier

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

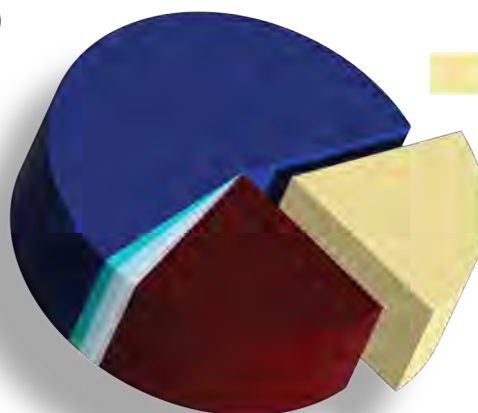
Name	Role	Position
William T. Boyett	Judge, Conasauga Judicial Circuit	Chair
Melanie B. Cross	Judge, Tifton Judicial Circuit	Vice Chair
Anne Barnes	Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Member
William "Bill" Hamrick III	Judge, Georgia State-wide Business Court	Member
Eric A. Richardson	Judge, State Court of Fulton County	Member
William P. Bartles	Judge, Flint Judicial Circuit Juvenile Court	Member
Melanie M. Bell	Judge, Probate Court of Newton County	Member
Cassandra Kirk	Judge, Magistrate Court of Fulton County	Member
Graham McKinnon IV	Judge, Braselton Municipal Court	Member
Brian A. McDaniel	Judge, Southern Judicial Circuit	Member
Linda Klein	Attorney, State Bar Representative	Member
Amy Howell	Attorney, State Bar Representative	Member
April Ross	Director, Georgia Commission on Family Violence	Member
Jody Overcash	Court Administrator, Cherokee superior, state, and juvenile courts	Member

MISSION: The Standing Committee on Grants (Committee) awards the Civil Legal Assistance to Families Victimized by Domestic Violence Grant (Domestic Violence Grant) and the Civil Legal Services to Kinship Care Families Grant (Kinship Care Grant) annually. Established in 1999 as the Judicial Council Domestic Violence Committee, the Committee was originally charged with awarding the Domestic Violence Grant. In 2017, the Committee's charge was expanded, allowing the Committee to oversee additional grants. In 2019, the Committee awarded the first Kinship Care Grants.

Grant Awards for FY 2023

Legal Assistance to Families Victimized by Domestic Violence Project (Domestic Violence Grant)

Georgia Legal Services Program, Inc.:	\$1,980,449
Northwest Georgia Family Crisis Center, Inc.:	\$43,500
N.O.A.'s Ark, Inc./NOA/	\$43,600
Gateway House, Inc.:	\$15,300
Cherokee Family Violence Center, Inc.:	\$17,153
Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Inc.:	\$810,000



Legal Assistance to Kinship Care Families Project (Kinship Care Grant): \$727,515

\$3,637,517 Total

JUDICIAL SECURITY

Staff to Committee: Cheryl Karounos

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Shawn Ellen LaGrua	Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Chair
Brian Rickman	Chief Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Vice Chair
Jeffrey S. Bagley	Chief Judge, Bell-Forsyth Judicial Circuit; CSCJ designee	Member
William "Bill" Hamrick III	Judge, State-Wide Business Court	Member
R. Violet Bennett	Judge, Wayne County State Court; CStCJ designee	Member
Maureen Wood	Judge, Rockdale Judicial Circuit Juvenile Court; CJCJ designee	Member
Mike Hunsinger	Judge, Oconee County Probate Court; CPCJ designee	Member
Scott Lewis	Judge, Effingham County Magistrate Court; CMCJ designee	Member
Matthew McCord	Chief Judge, Stockbridge Municipal Court; CMuCJ designee	Member
Kathryn Powers	Attorney; State Bar of Georgia Representative	Member
Josh Lamb	Lt. Col., Office of the Governor designee	Advisory Member
Brad Vaughan	Legislative Director and Counsel, Office of the Lt. Governor designee	Advisory Member
Keith Williams	General Counsel, Office of the Speaker of the Georgia House, designee	Advisory Member
Blair McGowan	Senior Assistant Attorney General, Georgia Department of Law designee	Advisory Member
Charlene McGowan	General Counsel, Office of the Georgia Secretary of State designee	Advisory Member
Charles "Chuck" Welch	Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission designee	Advisory Member
Richard Hyde	Georgia Department of Public Safety appointee	Advisory Member
Chris Hosey	Director, Georgia Bureau of Investigation	Advisory Member
Samir Patel	District Attorney, Cherokee Judicial Circuit, PAC designee	Advisory Member
John "Bart" Stevens	United States Marshal Service appointee	Advisory Member
Brent Loeffler	Program Coordinator, Georgia Sheriff's Association designee	Advisory Member
Butch Ayers	Executive Director, Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police designee	Advisory Member
Stan Cooper	Director- Probation Operations, Georgia Dept. of Corrections designee	Advisory Member
Scott Johnson	Association County Commissioners of Georgia designee	Advisory Member
Alison Earles	Associate General Counsel, Georgia Municipal Association designee	Advisory Member

MISSION: The Standing Committee on Judicial Security identifies and takes the steps necessary to protect the safety and security of Georgia's judiciary, both inside and outside the courthouse.

JUDICIAL WORKLOAD ASSESSMENT

Staff to Committee: Stephanie Hines

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Robert D. Leonard	Judge, Cobb Judicial Circuit	Chair
Amanda Petty	Judge, Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit	Vice Chair
William "Bill" Hamrick III	Judge, Georgia State-wide Business Court	Member
Gates Peed	Chief Judge, Ogeechee Judicial Circuit, 1st JAD	Member
Denise Marshall	Judge, Dougherty Judicial Circuit, 2nd JAD	Member
Jeffery Monroe	Judge, Macon Judicial Circuit, 3rd JAD	Member
LaTisha Dear Jackson	Chief Judge, Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit, 4th JAD	Member
Shukura Ingram	Judge, Atlanta Judicial Circuit, 5th JAD	Member
Scott Ballard	Judge, Griffin Judicial Circuit, 6th JAD	Member
Robert Flournoy III	Judge, Cobb Judicial Circuit, 7th JAD	Member
Bobby Chasteen	Chief Judge, Cordele Judicial Circuit, 8th JAD	Member
Bonnie Oliver	Judge, Northeastern Judicial Circuit, 9th JAD	Member
Sheryl B. Jolly	Judge, Columbia Judicial Circuit, 10th JAD	Member
Michelle L.H. Helhoski	Judge, State Court of Cherokee County	Member
Christopher Willis	Judge, Atlanta Judicial Circuit Juvenile Court	Member
Stephanie Hewell	Judge, Probate Court of Elbert County	Member
Matthew McCoyd	Judge, DeKalb County Magistrate Court	Member
Matthew Jordan	Judge, Athens Municipal Court	Member
Will Simmons	District Court Administrator, 6th JAD	Advisor
Bob Nadekow	District Court Administrator, 8th JAD	Advisor
Connie Cheatham	Clerk, McDuffie County Superior Court	Advisor
April Garrett	Clerk, Cook County Superior Court	Advisor
Lelaine Briones	Deputy Director, Prosecuting Attorneys' Council	Advisor
John Ellington	Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Advisor
Shawn Ellen LaGrua	Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Advisor
E. Trenton Brown III	Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Advisor
Christopher Hansard	Court Administrator, Cobb Superior Court	Advisor
David Emerson	Judge (ret.), Douglas Judicial Circuit	Advisor

MISSION: The Judicial Workload Assessment Committee determines the methodology for analysis of data collected through annual trial court case counts. Additionally, based on staff studies, they make recommendations to the Judicial Council as to the need for additional judicial personnel.

LEGISLATION

Staff to Committee: Tracy Mason

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Nels S.D. Peterson	Presiding Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Chair
Brian M. Rickman	Chief Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Vice Chair
William “Bill” Hamrick III	Judge, Georgia State-wide Business Court	Member
Arthur L. Smith III	Chief Judge, Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit; President, CSCJ	Member
R. Violet Bennett	Judge, State Court of Wayne County; President, CStCJ	Member
Render M. Heard, Jr.	Judge, Tifton Circuit Juvenile Court; President, CJCJ	Member
B. Shawn Rhodes	Judge, Probate Court of Wilcox County; President, CPCJ	Member
Rebecca J. Pitts	Judge, Magistrate Court of Butts County; President, CMaCJ	Member
JaDawnya C. Baker	Judge, Atlanta Municipal Court; President, CMuCJ	Member
Robert “Bert” Guy	Judge, Brunswick Judicial Circuit; Legislative Chair, CSCJ	Advisory Member
Maria Golick	Judge, Cobb State Court; Legislative Co-Chair, CStCJ	Advisory Member
Gregory V. Sapp	Chief Judge, Chatham State Court; Legislative Co-Chair, CStCJ	Advisory Member
Render Heard	Judge, Tifton Judicial Circuit Juvenile Court; Legislative Chair, CJCJ	Advisory Member
Keith Wood	Judge, Probate Court of Dooly County; Legislative Chair, CPCJ	Advisory Member
Megan Kinsey	Judge, Butts County Magistrate Court; Legislative Co-Chair, CMaCJ	Advisory Member
Brendan F. Murphy	Judge, Cobb County Magistrate Court; Legislative Co-Chair, CMaCJ	Advisory Member
Charles Barrett	Judge, Duluth Municipal Court; Legislative Co-Chair, CMuCJ	Advisory Member
Tommy Bobbitt	Judge, Jeffersonville Municipal Court; Legislative Co-Chair, CMuCJ	Advisory Member
Cynthia Clanton	Director, Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts	Advisory Member
Shannon Weathers	Executive Director, CSCJ	Advisory Member
Bob Bray	Executive Director, CStCJ	Advisory Member
Eric John	Executive Director, CJCJ	Advisory Member
Kevin Holder	Executive Director, CPCJ	Advisory Member
Sharon Reiss	Executive Director, CMaCJ	Advisory Member
Ivy Cadle	State Bar of Georgia designee	Advisory Member

MISSION: The Legislation Committee reviews legislation affecting the judicial branch and recommends policy positions to the Judicial Council where appropriate.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Staff to Committee: Jessica Farah, Esq. and Cheryl Karounos
Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Sara L. Doyle	Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Chair
William "Bill" Hamrick III	Judge, Georgia State-wide Business Court	Member
Amanda Petty	Judge, Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit	Member
Gregory V. Sapp	Judge, Chatham County State Court	Member
Temika Williams Murry	Judge, DeKalb County Juvenile Court	Member
Sarah S. Harris	Judge, Bibb County State Court	Member
Brandon T. Bryson	Judge, Bartow County Magistrate Court	Member
Matthew M. McCord	Chief Judge, Stockbridge Municipal Court	Member
John J. Ellington	Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Member
Rizza P. O'Connor	Attorney, State Bar of Georgia Representative	Member

MISSION: The mission of the Strategic Plan Standing Committee is to create and implement a Judicial Council strategic plan. The committee implements the initiatives of the strategic plan through the staff of the AOC. The FY 20-22 strategic plan was adopted in December 2019 and work under the plan began soon after. The plan was extended through fiscal year 2023 in April of FY21.

TECHNOLOGY

Staff to Committee: Kristy King
Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Shawn Ellen LaGrua	Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Co-Chair
Stephen Kelley	Judge, Brunswick Judicial Circuit	Co-Chair
William "Bill" Hamrick III	Judge, Georgia State-wide Business Court	Member
Clyde L. Reese	Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Member
Diane E. Bessen	Judge, State Court of Fulton County	Member
Vincent Crawford	Judge, DeKalb County Juvenile Court	Member
Edith Haney	Judge, Probate Court of Carroll County	Member
James Altman	Judge, Magistrate Court of Fannin County	Member
Margaret Washburn	Chief Judge, Lawrenceville Municipal Court	Member
Stan Gunter	State Representative, District 8	Member
Bo Hatchett	State Senator, District 50	Member
Cynthia Parks McCaskill	Attorney	Member
Shamiracle Rankin	Attorney	Member
T.J. BeMent	District Court Administrator, 10th JAD	Member
Ben Luke	Chief Technology Officer, Judicial Council/AOC	Member
Cindy Mason	Clerk, Columbia County Superior Court	Member
Wright Banks	Deputy Attorney General, Georgia Attorney General's Office	Member
Shelia Studdard	Clerk, Fayette County Superior Court	Member

MISSION: The Standing Committee on Technology provides guidance and oversight for the Judicial Council's technology initiatives.



Judicial Council of Georgia

STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2020-2023
Revised

VISION

To improve justice in all Georgia courts through **collaboration, innovation, and information.**

MISSION

The Judicial Council and AOC lead collaboration on policy across Georgia's courts to **improve the administration of justice in Georgia.**

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Uphold the independence and integrity of the judiciary.

Promote efficient and effective administration of justice.

Use data to lead to data-driven services and programs for the Judicial Branch.

Collaborate and communicate with key stakeholders in judicial, executive, and legislative branches.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

1

IMPROVE CITIZEN EXPERIENCE WITH GEORGIA COURTS

KEY INITIATIVES

1.1 Modernize the regulations of Court professionals

Measurable action: Monitor and assist with the update of rules and regulations regarding Court Reporters and Court Interpreters. (MT)

Measurable action: Report back to the Judicial Council. (LT)

1.2 Increase resources for public accessibility

Measurable action: Flesh out what public accessibility means. (ST)

Measurable action: Frame what it would look like to help citizens with public accessibility as defined. (MT)

1.3 Educate citizens on the use of case-related filing technology

Measurable action: Create a toolkit of existing resources citizens can access from one portal which will provide information on Court-related questions. (LT)

1.4 Develop plan for public/self-represented party accessibility to courts during crisis when physical access to courts are limited

Measurable action: Analyze access and response issues of current crisis on each class of court. Collect the data differences between the technology used in urban and rural areas of the State. (ST)

Measurable action: Create a planned response for each class of court according to technology capabilities to address public/self-represented party accessibility during crisis with limited physical access to the courts. (LT)



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

2

IMPROVE COLLABORATION AND PLANNING

KEY INITIATIVES

2.1 Foster ongoing executive and legislative branch communications and initiatives of mutual interest

Measurable action: Monitor the communication and advocacy done on behalf of the Judiciary. (ongoing)

2.2 Improve the process for data collection and data integrity

Measurable action: Create basic plan for the process of data collection to share with the various councils. (MT)

Measurable action: Share with the councils and stakeholders to obtain buy-in. (LT)

2.3 Pursue flexibility and efficiency in judicial education

Measurable action: Study the possibilities for flexibility and efficiency in judicial education across different classes of court. (MT)

Measurable action: Collaborate with ICJE to offer classes on topics requested by the Judicial Council such as sexual harassment prevention and ethics. (MT)

Measurable action: Compile and maintain a listing of all trainings sponsored or provided by the JC/AOC. (ST)

2.4 Improve technology access, support and training across all classes of courts

Measurable action: Audit/Survey technology access, support and electronic capabilities across all class of courts, including identifying video and telephone conference platforms in use by each class of court. (ST)

Measurable action: Collaborate with AOC and Councils to offer support and solutions to technology issues for courts without support or funding. (LT)

Measurable action: Create resource (bench card) of best practices and options for video and teleconferencing proceedings – Rules of Engagement. (MT)

Measurable action: Collaborate with ICJE to offer classes or online training on video conferencing particular to each class of court, including instructions on the use of video conferencing applications such as Web Ex, Zoom, Microsoft Teams. (LT)

2.5 Support all classes of Court in crisis management response taking into consideration both rural and urban areas and socio-economic factors for courts

Measurable action: Assist and support Councils for each class of court in identifying emergency functions and prioritizing other court functions that may be performed even during certain crisis situations. (LT)

Measurable action: Assist and support Councils for each class of court to create a well-defined emergency response plan. (MT)

Measurable action: Create reference guide to Pandemic issues in the Courts. (ST–MT)

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

3

PROMOTE THE WELLBEING, HEALTH, AND INTEGRITY OF THE JUDICIARY

KEY INITIATIVES

3.1 Develop a toolkit of wellness resources

Measurable action: Create a definition for “wellness” to be used when deciding which items belong in the toolkit. (ST)

Measurable action: Create the toolkit, which will be a compilation of resources to support “wellness”, possibly including State Bar resources among others. (LT)

3.2 Communicate and promote the toolkit

Measurable action: Leverage relationships with ICJE and each Council to offer training on the toolkit to each Council for one year. (LT)

Measurable action: Develop feedback survey for the trainings. (LT)

Measurable action: Encourage a “wellness” event at each Judicial Council and court meeting. (LT)

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

4

ENHANCE THE PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL IMAGE OF THE JUDICIARY

KEY INITIATIVES

4.1 Support judges in community engagement

Measurable action: Continue to create and gather positive stories about the judiciary. (ongoing)

Measurable action: Develop practical rules for social media engagement. (ST)

4.2 Develop a clearinghouse of resources for community engagement

Measurable action: Create the clearinghouse, which will be a compilation of existing resources members of the Judiciary can access when participating in community-facing programs. (MT)

4.3 Communicate and promote the clearinghouse

Measurable action: Set a schedule for communicating the clearinghouse; set a calendar with events to support community engagement. (LT)

Judicial Council of Georgia
AD HOC COMMITTEES

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDING (ARPA)

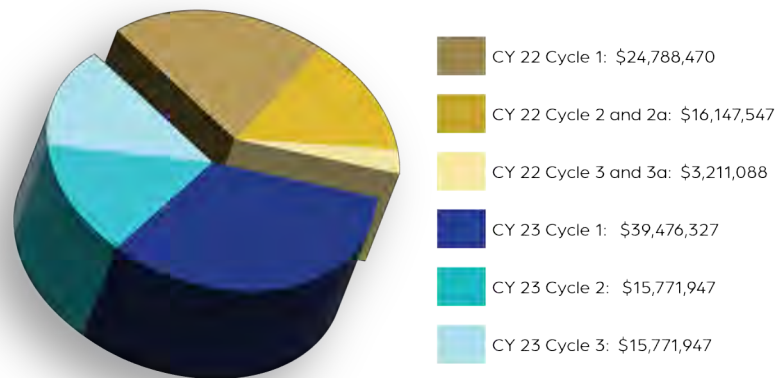
Staff to Committee: Tracy Mason and Shimike Dodson

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Michael P. Boggs	Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Chair
Amanda H. Mercier	Vice Chief Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Member
D. Jay Stewart	Judge, Atlantic Judicial Circuit, 1st JAD	Member
Melanie B. Cross	Judge, Tifton Judicial Circuit, 2nd JAD	Member
W. James Sizemore, Jr.	Judge, Southwestern Judicial Circuit, 3rd JAD	Member
LaTisha Dear Jackson	Chief Judge, Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit, 4th JAD	Member
Ural Glanville	Chief Judge, Atlanta Judicial Circuit, 5th JAD	Member
W. Fletcher Sams	Chief Judge, Tifton Judicial Circuit, 6th JAD	Member
Scott Smith	Judge, Cherokee Judicial Circuit, 7th JAD	Member
Sarah F. Wall	Chief Judge, Oconee Judicial Circuit, 8th JAD	Member
R. Timothy Hamil	Chief Judge, Gwinnett Judicial Circuit, 9th JAD	Member
J. Wade Padgett	Judge, Columbia Judicial Circuit, 10th JAD	Member
Peter J. Skandalakis	Executive Director, Prosecuting Attorneys' Council	Member

MISSION: The Ad Hoc Committee on American Rescue Plan Act Funding is responsible for soliciting, reviewing, and approving applications for eligible courts and judicial system stakeholders requesting the dissemination of federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funds allocated to the Judicial Branch for eligible expenditures aimed at addressing backlogs of court cases, particularly cases involving serious violent felonies.

Grant Awards by cycle, as of July 1, 2023



AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDING (ARPA) *continued*

Staff to Committee: Tracy Mason and Shimike Dodson

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Angie Davis	Clerk, Georgia State-wide Business Court designee	Advisory Member
R. Violet Bennett	Judge, State Court of Wayne County; President, CStCJ	Advisory Member
Render M. Heard, Jr.	Judge, Tifton Circuit Juvenile Court; President, CJCJ	Advisory Member
B. Shawn Rhodes	Judge, Probate Court of Wilcox County; President; CPCJ	Advisory Member
Quinn M. Kasper	Judge, Magistrate Court of Cobb County; CM CJ designee	Advisory Member
David Will	Chief Judge, Alpharetta Municipal Court; CMu CJ designee	Advisory Member
Ivy Cadle	Attorney, State Bar Designee	Advisory Member
Brenda S. Weaver	Chief Judge, Appalachian Judicial Circuit, CACJ designee	Advisory Member
T.J. BeMent	District Court Administrator, 10th JAD	Advisory Member
Robin Rooks	Court Administrator ; GCCA	Advisory Member
Bill Twomey	County Consulting Services Manager, ACCG designee	Advisory Member
Alison Earles	Associate General Counsel, GMA designee	Advisory Member
J. Terry Norris	Executive Director, Georgia Sheriffs' Association	Advisory Member
Butch Ayers	Executive Director, Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police	Advisory Member
Tina Robinson	Clerk, Fulton County Superior Court; GSCC designee	Advisory Member
LaQuetta Walker	Court Reporter, GCRA designee	Advisory Member
Maria Ceballos-Wallis	Court Interpreter, Committee on Court Interpreters designee	Advisory Member
Omatayo Alli	Executive Director, Georgia Public Defender Council	Advisory Member
Jason Sheffield	Attorney; GACDL	Advisory Member
Mary Margaret Oliver	State Representative, District 82	Advisory Member
Brian Strickland	State Senator, District 17	Advisory Member
Michael Register	Director, GBI	Advisory Member

MISSION: The Ad Hoc Committee on American Rescue Plan Act Funding is responsible for soliciting, reviewing, and approving applications for eligible courts and judicial system stakeholders requesting the dissemination of federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funds allocated to the Judicial Branch for eligible expenditures aimed at addressing backlogs of court cases, particularly cases involving serious violent felonies.

JUDICIAL COVID-19 TASK FORCE

Staff to Committee: Cheryl Karounos

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Shawn Ellen LaGrua	Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Co-Chair
T. Russell McClelland	Chief Judge, State Court of Forsyth County	Co-Chair
Michael P. Boggs	Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Member
Robert D. Leonard II	Judge, Cobb Judicial Circuit	Member
Asha F. Jackson	Chief Judge, Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit	Member
Kathlene F. Gosselin	Chief Judge, Northeastern Judicial Circuit	Member
Ken Hodges	Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Member
William "Bill" Hamrick III	Judge, Georgia State-Wide Business Court	Member
Lindsay H. Burton	Judge, Northeastern Judicial Circuit Juvenile Court	Member
Melanie C. Bell	Judge, Newton County Probate Court	Member
Brendan Murphy	Judge, Cobb County Magistrate Court	Member
Norman Cuadra	Chief Judge, Suwanee Municipal Court	Member
Paige Reese Whitaker	Judge, Atlanta Judicial Circuit, Superior Court	Member
Elizabeth Fite	Attorney, Past-President Georgia State Bar	Member
Stacy Haralson	Clerk, Harris County Superior Court	Member
Cynthia Clanton	Director, Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts	Member
Bryan Webb	Deputy Attorney General, Georgia Department of Law	Member
Lynne Moore Nelson	Executive Director, Institute of Continuing Judicial Education	Member
Courtney Veal	Director, Judicial Qualifications Commission	Member
Kimberly D. Charles	Deputy Director, Atlanta Legal Aid	Member
Robin Rooks	Court Administrator, Bell-Forsyth Judicial Circuit	Member
Robert Smith	General Counsel, Prosecuting Attorneys' Council	Member
Marilyn Primovic	Attorney, Fulton County Public Defenders Office	Member
Adam Malone	Attorney, Georgia Trial Lawyers Association	Member
David Nelson	Attorney, Georgia Defense Lawyers Association	Member
Don Samuel	Attorney, Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers	Member
Clint Mueller	Legislative Director, Association County Commissioners of Georgia	Member
William Custer	Georgia Chamber of Commerce – Law and Judiciary Committee	Member
Yvette Daniels	Georgia Department of Public Health	Member
Marial Ellis	Georgia Department of Community Health	Member
Phil Sellers	Department of Community Supervision	Member
Terry Norris	Georgia Sheriffs' Association	Member

MISSION: The Judicial COVID-19 Task Force was established May 14, 2020, as an ad hoc committee of the Judicial Council, with the mission of assisting courts in conducting remote proceedings and in restoring more in-court proceedings, in particular jury trials and grand jury proceedings. The Task Force includes judges from the various classes of court and obtains input from key stakeholders including the State Bar of Georgia, prosecutors and public defenders, civil plaintiff and defense attorneys, court clerks, sheriffs, and the public.

JUDICIAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Staff to Committee: Ben Luke

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Amanda Petty	Judge, Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit	Co-Chair
Trea Pipkin	Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Co-Chair
Shawn Ellen LaGrue	Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Member
William "Bill" Hamrick III	Judge, Georgia State-Wide Business Court	Member
Eric Richardson	Judge, Fulton County State Court	Member
Christopher Yokom	Judge, Fulton County Juvenile Court	Member
Susan Schaffer	Judge, Clarke County Probate Court	Member
Quinn Kasper	Judge, Cobb County Magistrate Court	Member
Brian McDaniel	Judge, Southern Judicial Circuit	Member
Lori Duff	Judge, Monroe Municipal Court	Member
Elizabeth Fite	Attorney, State Bar of Georgia Representative	Member
Courtney Veal	Director, Judicial Qualifications Commission	Advisory Member
Josh Weeks	Georgia Council of Court Administrators	Advisory Member
Robert Smith	Prosecuting Attorneys' Council	Advisory Member
Sheila Ross	Prosecuting Attorneys' Council	Advisory Member
Bill Twomey	Association County Commissioners of Georgia	Advisory Member
Terry Norris	Georgia Sheriffs' Association	Advisory Member
Brent Loeffler	Georgia Sheriffs' Association	Advisory Member
Mike Mitchell	Georgia Sheriffs' Association	Advisory Member
Alison Earles	Georgia Municipal Association	Advisory Member
Ashleigh Merchant	Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers	Advisory Member
Butch Ayers	Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police	Advisory Member
Carter Brown	Council of Superior Court Clerks	Advisory Member
Lynne Moore Nelson	Institute of Continuing Judicial Education	Advisory Member
Omotayo Alli	Georgia Public Defender Council	Advisory Member
Daniela Perry	Georgia Chamber of Commerce	Advisory Member
Dart Meadows	Georgia Defense Lawyers Association	Advisory Member
Marial Ellis	Georgia Department of Community Health	Advisory Member
Stan Cooper	Georgia Department of Corrections	Advisory Member
Bert Flewellen	Department of Community Supervision	Advisory Member
Beth Burton	Georgia Department of Law	Advisory Member
Melanie Simon	Georgia Department of Public Health	Advisory Member
Madeleine Simmons	Georgia Trial Lawyers Association	Advisory Member

MISSION: The Committee will create a comprehensive plan that contemplates thirteen identified hazards and the processes, protocols, and succession plans for continuing court operations if they occur, as outlined by the federal and Georgia emergency management agencies. The Committee will include judges from the various classes of court and State Bar representative, and will obtain input from key stakeholders, including the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency, prosecutors and public defenders, civil plaintiff and defense attorneys, clerks of court, sheriffs, and the public.

JUDICIAL SALARIES AND SUPPLEMENTS

Staff to Committee: Andrew Zoll

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
Charlie Bethel	Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Co-Chair
Russell Smith	Chief Judge, Mountain Judicial Circuit	Co-Chair
Trenton Brown	Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Member
William "Bill" Hamrick III	Judge, Georgia State-wide Business Court	Member
Jeffrey H. Kight	Judge, Waycross Judicial Circuit	Member
A. Gregory Poole	Judge, Cobb Judicial Circuit	Member
Darius Pattillo	District Attorney, District Attorneys' Assoc. of GA representative	Member
Omotayo Alli	Executive Director, Georgia Public Defender Council	Member
Michael O'Quinn	County Consulting Services Associate, ACCG	Member
Alvin T. Wong	Judge, DeKalb State Court; CStCJ designee	Advisory Member
Vincent Crawford	Judge, DeKalb Juvenile Court; CJCJ designee	Advisory Member
Daisy Weeks-Marisko	Judge, Forsyth Probate Court; CPCJ designee	Advisory Member
Connie Holt	Judge, Morgan Magistrate Court; CMaCJ designee	Advisory Member
Ryan Hope	Judge, Athens Municipal Court; CMuCJ designee	Advisory Member
DeMetris Causer	Attorney; GMA designee	Advisory Member
J. Antonio DelCampo	Attorney; State Bar of Georgia designee	Advisory Member
Stacy Haralson	Clerk, Harris County Superior Court; COAG designee	Advisory Member
Peter J. Skandalakis	Executive Director, PAC; PAC designee	Advisory Member
Joshua Weeks	Court Administrator, Conasauga Judicial Circuit, GCCA designee	Advisory Member

MISSION:

1. To update and expand upon the December 16, 2016 report of the General Assembly's Judicial, District Attorney, and Circuit Public Defender Compensation Committee to reflect current amounts of state-paid salaries, state-paid salary supplements (e.g., for accountability courts), and county-paid salary supplements, as well as any state-paid or county-paid retirement benefits or other significant monetary benefits related to supplements, for Justices of the Supreme Court, Judges of the Court of Appeals, the Judge of the State-wide Business Court, superior court judges, district attorneys, and circuit public defenders, and to update comparisons to salaries for similar positions in other states;
2. To identify which county-paid officials' salaries or salary or retirement supplements are determined by reference to the salaries or supplements of superior court judges, district attorneys, or circuit public defenders, so as to better understand the consequences of changes to the compensation of state-paid officials;
3. To develop, evaluate, and recommend options for revising or eliminating the system of county paid supplements, including the costs to the State and the counties of any options that are deemed practically and politically feasible, including by garnering supermajority support from the superior court judges.

Connected Boards, Committees, Commissions, and Councils

BOARD OF COURT REPORTING

Staff to Committee: Herbert Gordon III

Authorized and created by Supreme Court order

Name	Role	Position
John Kent Edwards, Jr.	Chief Judge, State Court of Lowndes County	Chair
Randi Strumlauf	Freelance Court Reporter, Voice Writer	Vice-Chair
Brenda Trammell	Chief Judge, Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit	Member
Frederic Bold, Jr.	Attorney, State Bar Representative	Member
Harold Daniel	Attorney, State Bar Representative	Member
Daniel Gershwin	Freelance Court Reporter, Machine Shorthand	Member
Kevin King	Freelance Court Reporter, Machine Shorthand	Member
Christopher Paul Twyman	Attorney	Member
Kate Cochran	Freelance Court Reporter, Machine Shorthand	Member
Pavon Bohanan	Freelance Court Reporter, Voice Writer	Member
Cynthia H. Clanton	Director, Judicial Council/AOC	Member

MISSION: The Georgia General Assembly established the Board of Court Reporting of the Judicial Council of Georgia to ensure the integrity and competency of the court reporting practice. The Board of Court Reporting establishes and enforces standards that govern court reporters and provides a forum for an exchange of ideas and educational services.

COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES

Taylor Jones, Executive Director
<https://cacj.georgia.gov/>

Name	Role	Position
Charles E. Auslander, III	Judge, Athens-Clarke County, State Court	Chair
Lawton E. Stephens	Judge, Western Judicial Circuit, Superior Courts	Vice-Chair
Cynthia C. Adams	Judge, Douglas Judicial Circuit, Superior Court	Member
Karen E. Beyers	Judge, Gwinnett Judicial Circuit, Superior Court	Member
Jeremy Clough	Judge, Enotah Judicial Circuit, Juvenile Courts	Member
Maureen C. Gottfried	Judge, Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit, Superior Courts	Member
Robert C.I. McBurney	Judge, Atlanta Judicial Circuit, Superior Court	Member
John E. Niedrach	Judge, Rome Judicial Circuit, Superior Court	Member
W. James Sizemore Jr.	Chief Judge, Mountain Judicial Circuit, Superior Courts	Member
Jason B. Thompson	Judge, Fayette County, State Court	Member
Judge D. Scott Smith	Judge, Cherokee Judicial Circuit, Superior Courts	Immediate Past Chair

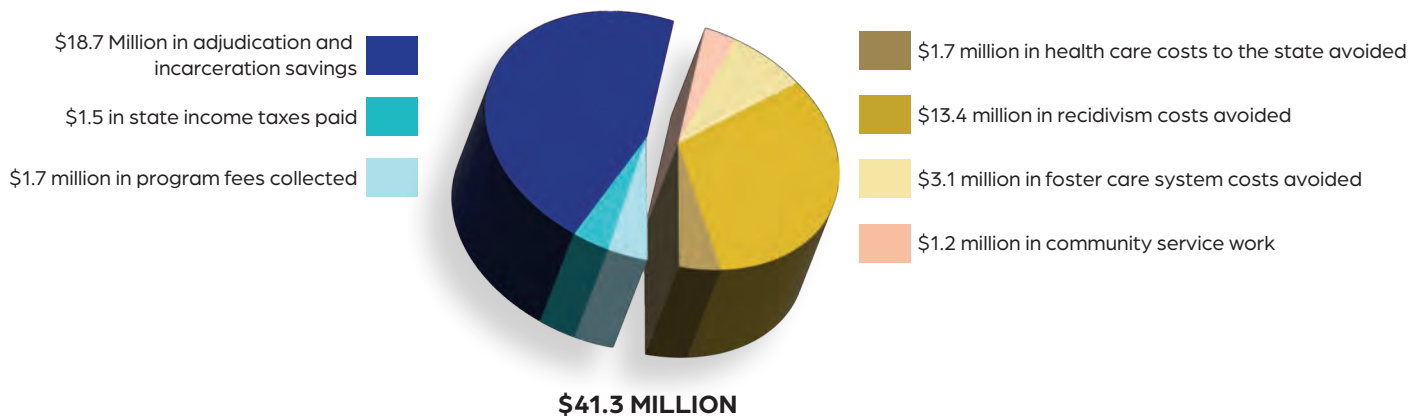
MISSION: To provide a unified framework that promotes and improves the quality, accessibility and administration of Accountability Courts.

VISION: Making accountability courts work for all Georgians.

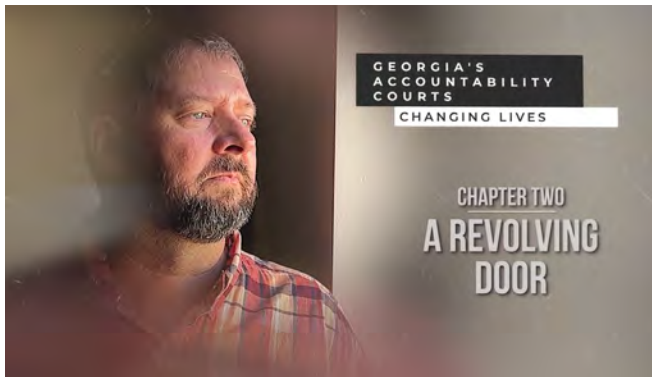
HIGHLIGHTS

- In FY 2023 there were 184 accountability courts serving 7,464 participants. This is a 4% increase in participants over FY 2022. Research performed by the Statistical Analysis Center at the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council found that for every dollar invested in an adult accountability court participant, the state saved \$5.33. Combined, this represents total diversion savings of \$146 million dollars.
- A refresh of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government's (CVIOG) economic impact study was performed. It found that each adult accountability court graduate produces \$25,921 in economic impact to the state of Georgia. It also found that adult graduates in FY22 netted and estimated economic benefits of \$41 million. More information and literature can be found at cacj.georgia.gov.

Estimated Annual Benefits of Accountability Courts

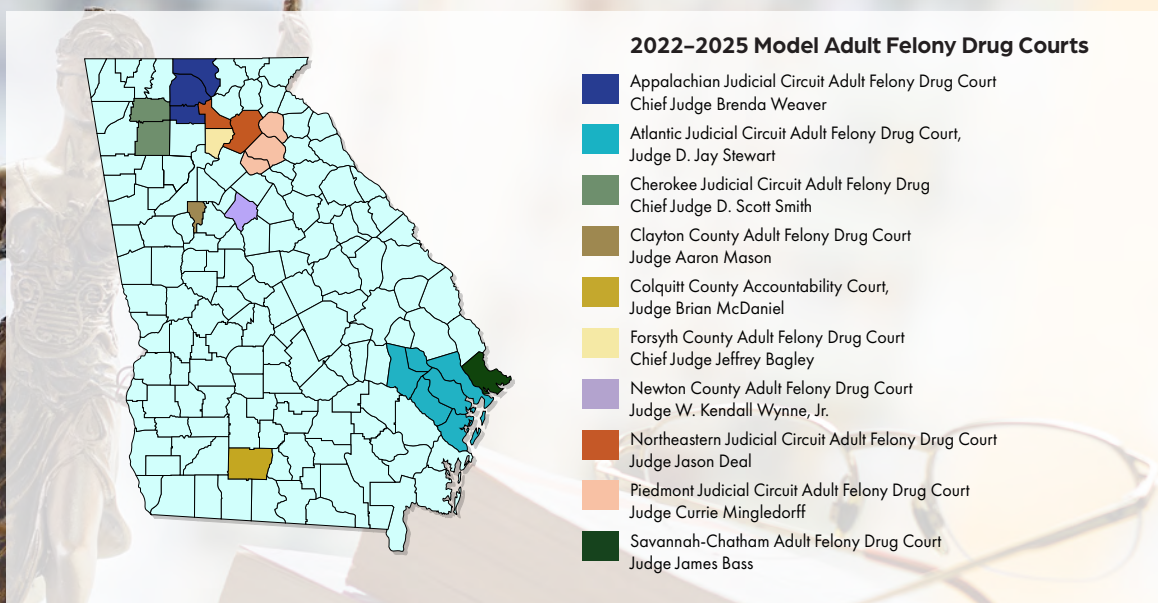


- CACJ held its annual training conference October 9-12, 2022. The conference was in person with 1,289 attendees onsite in Athens at The Classic Center. CACJ once again featured national and local speakers for this training event. Additionally, for 2022 CACJ hosted breakout sessions tailored toward new, intermediate, and advanced accountability court teams.



- CACJ debuted the Georgia's Accountability Courts: Changing Lives video (shown above). The purpose of the video is to highlight the lifesaving work that Georgia's accountability courts perform each day. A copy of the video is available on the CACJ website (cacj.georgia.gov).
- 73 court coordinators graduated from the CVIIOG certified coordinator training program. Reviews for the program are positive. CACJ is working to extend the program beyond current coordinators to develop the next phase of accountability court workforce.

- CACJ's Nominations Committee selected Model adult felony drug courts for 2022 - 2025. The goal of Georgia's Accountability Court Model Court Program is to recognize the great work of accountability courts across the state, as well as identify strong programs that may serve as mentors for other courts.
- CACJ received notice of intent to apply for state fiscal year 2023 funding from four (4) implementation courts that wish to begin operations on July 1, 2023. These new, implementation programs consist of adult mental health courts, family treatment courts, and juvenile accountability courts.
- CACJ's Standards and Certification Committee met in February to review certification applications and waivers from 63 accountability courts including adult felony drug courts, adult mental health courts, veterans' treatment courts, DUI courts, and family treatment courts. All reviewed courts were certified, and technical assistance is being provided, as needed.
- CACJ continues to offer a robust training calendar. Training programs in FY23 included: the annual conference, CVIIOG Certified Coordinator, NDIC adult felony drug court operational tune-up, NDIC family treatment courts tune-up, and adult mental health court refresher. Further training opportunities were provided at the 2023 Winter Forum for judges and court coordinators, as well as a medicated assisted treatment webinar and an in-person treatment provider refresher training in May 2023.



COMMISSION ON DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Tracy B. Johnson, Executive Director; Karlie A. Sahs, Deputy Director
<https://godr.org>

Name	Role	Position
M. Cindy Morris	Chief Judge, Conasauga Judicial Circuit, Superior Courts	Chair
John J. Ellington	Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Member
Sara L. Doyle	Presiding Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Member
Jane C. Barwick	Judge, Fulton Judicial Circuit, Superior Court	Member
N. Staten Bitting Jr.	Attorney	Member
Rebecca Crumrine Rieder	Attorney, Fmr. Judge, Atlanta Judicial Circuit, Superior Court	Member
Clarence Cuthpert, Jr.	Chief Judge, State Court of Rockdale County	Member
Mary S. Donovan, Esq.	Attorney, Mediator	Member
Herbert H. (Hal) Gray III	Attorney, Mediator/Arbitrator	Member
Melissa C. Heard	Mediator, ADR Trainer	Member
Nicole W. Hull, Esq.	Attorney, Mediator, ADR Trainer	Member
Rob Leverett, Esq.	Attorney, State Representative, District 33	Member
Carrie B. Markham	Judge, Probate Court of Coweta County	Member
Patrick T. O'Connor	Attorney, Mediator	Member
Pandora E. Palmer	Judge, Flint Judicial Circuit, Superior Court	Member
Edith B. Primm	Attorney, Mediator, ADR Trainer	Member
Vic Reynolds	Judge, Cobb Judicial Circuit, Superior Court	Member
Renata D. Turner	Judge, Atlanta Judicial Circuit, Juvenile Court	Member
Randall Weiland	Mediator, Program Director, Atlantic Judicial Circuit ADR Program	Member
Peggy McCoy Wilson	Mediator	Member

MISSION: The Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution (GCDR) is a policy-making body appointed by the Supreme Court of Georgia, charged with helping to fulfill its Constitutional mandate to “provide for the speedy, efficient, and inexpensive resolution of disputes and prosecutions” in the judiciary. The Commission does this by managing a statewide system that offers true and effective alternatives to traditional litigation. Those alternatives – mediation, non-binding arbitration, and case evaluation – give Georgia litigants lower-cost choices for resolving their differences, and they help save scarce court resources for those cases that cannot be resolved without a judge or jury.



HIGHLIGHTS

- There are currently 36 approved court programs (serving 111 counties) and 3,000 registered neutrals (mediators, arbitrators, and evaluators). The Commission remains committed to improving justice by supporting high-quality dispute resolution services throughout Georgia's courts.
- The 2022 ADR Institute was held on November 18 at the Georgia Tech Hotel & Conference Center. This was the first in-person event in two years, with an option for virtual attendance. In total, there were over 400 registered for the event.
- GCDR issued Ethics Opinion 7 as guidance for mediators on the use of social media. The opinion highlighted the dangers of social media use and importance of professional integrity.
- GODR published an advisory memo to provide guidance to mediators on the use of virtual platforms, such as Zoom, to conduct mediations. In addition to this advisory memo, the GODR will be releasing a best practices manual for mediators which will include a section dedicated to virtual mediations.
- The GCDR Outreach Committee has published an ADR Court Program Handbook, which will serve as a guide for both courts with existing ADR programs and those who wish to create a new ADR Program. The handbook includes existing materials such as the Supreme Court of Georgia ADR Rules, ADR-related legislation, and court ADR program resources as well as two new policies: Filing Fee Policy and Policy on Maintaining Good Standing. These newly adopted policies are meant to guide court ADR programs in the use of ADR funds and on remaining in compliance with the GCDR.
- While some of Georgia's Probate Courts have regularly referring cases to mediation, the use of mediation in probate matters remains relatively low compared to its use in other courts. On May 3, 2023, with support of the Probate Judges' Council, the GCDR approved a new neutral registration category for Probate Mediation to encourage the use of mediation in probate court. The creation of this new registration category, the first addition in over twenty (20) years, also generated a need for developing new requirements for qualification and training of mediators for Probate Court cases. GCDR is in the process of executing its implementation plan to educate and train all stakeholders, including judges, court and ADR program administrators, attorneys, mediators, and others working with probate-related matters. Mediator training for Probate Mediation will begin in 2024 and will include five (5) GODR-sponsored live trainings for mediators, co-presented in a train-the-trainer format.
- Several long-serving members rolled off the Commission in FY23: Chief Judge Amanda Mercier, Judge C. Andrew Fuller, and Judge Jane C. Barwick. Chief Judge Mercier was appointed to the Commission in 2016 and served on the Budget and Personnel Committee. Judge Fuller was appointed in 2009 and served as Chair of the Budget and Personnel Committee from 2014-2022. Judge Barwick served on the Commission for 6 years, serving as Chair from 2019 to 2021 and as Chair of the Committee on Ethics from 2018 to 2019. The Commission is grateful for each outgoing members' contribution to dispute resolution in Georgia. Replacing the outgoing members are: Presiding Judge Sara Doyle of the Court of Appeals of Georgia, Judge Pandora Palmer of the Flint Judicial Circuit, and Judge Vic Reynolds of the Cobb Judicial Circuit.



Left: Judge C. Andrew Fuller was honored for his 13 years of service at the November 2, 2022 meeting. **Center:** Chief Judge Cindy Morris, Judge Jane C. Barwick, and Tracy B. Johnson, at the February 8 meeting. **Right:** Tracy B. Johnson, Chief Judge M. Cindy Morris, Judge Pandora Palmer and Judge Vic Reynolds.

COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

Diana Rugh Johnson, Program Director, Court Improvement Program

Name	Role	Position
Charles Bethel	Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia	Chair
Kim Anderson	CEO, Families First	Member
Mandi Ballinger	State Representative, District 23	Member
Candice Broce	Commissioner, Georgia Department of Human Services	Member
Emma Brown-Bernstein	Staff Attorney, Public Defender, Atlanta Judicial Circuit	Member
Jerry Bruce	Director, Office of the Child Advocate	Member
Neal Brunt	Judge, Cherokee Judicial Circuit, Juvenile Courts	Member
Lindsay H. Burton	Judge, Northeastern Judicial Circuit, Superior Courts	Member
Chris Carr	Attorney General, Georgia Office of the Attorney General	Member
Stephen L.A. Dillard	Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Member
Chuck Efstration	State Representative, District 104	Member
Louis Erste	State Schools Chief Policy Officer and Title IX Coordinator, GaDOE	Member
Laurie-Ann Fallon	SAAG, Barrow County Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS)	Member
Darice Good	Attorney	Member
Arleymah Gray	Director of Federal Plans, Georgia Division of Family & Children Services	Member
Britt Hammond	Judge, Toombs Judicial Circuit, Superior Courts	Member
Render Heard Jr.	Judge, Tifton Judicial Circuit, Juvenile Courts	Member
Amanda Heath	Judge, Augusta Judicial Circuit, Superior Courts	Member
Dr. Sharon Hill	Clinical Associate Professor, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, GSU	Member
Warner Kennon	Judge, Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit, Juvenile Courts	Member
Michael Key	Judge, Coweta Judicial Circuit, Juvenile Courts	Member
Jennifer King	Executive Director, Georgia CASA	Member
Glenene Lanier	Permanency Section Director, Georgia DFCS	Member
Juliana Lassiter	Parent with lived experience	Member
Nealie McCormick	Chairman, Council on American Indian Concerns	Member
Mary Margaret Oliver	State Representative, District 82	Member
Tyrone Oliver	Commissioner, Department of Juvenile Justice	Member
Jacqueline L. Payne	Managing Attorney, Kinship Care Project at Atlanta Legal Aid	Member
Gregory Price	Senior Judge, Juvenile Court of Floyd County	Member
Steven Reed	QA/CQI Lead, Georgia DFCS	Member
Freddie Powell Sims	State Senator, District 12	Member
Juanita Stedman	Judge (Ret.), Juvenile Court of Cobb County	Member
Jennifer Stein	Executive Director, Prevent Child Abuse Georgia	Member
Anthony Reeves Stover	Youth Engagement Coordinator, Multi-Agency Alliance for Children	Member
Blake Tillery	State Senator, District 19	Member
Michael Waller	Executive Director, Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice	Member
Julie Walters	Training Lead, Georgia DFCS	Member
Danielle Whitaker	Judicial Staff Attorney, Fulton County Juvenile Court	Member
Maureen Wood	Judge, Rockdale Judicial Circuit, Juvenile Courts	Member
Robert Wright	Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta	Member

MISSION: Striving to improve justice for children and families within the child welfare legal system.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Court Process Reporting System (CPRS) meets the need for real-time data sharing between the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), the courts, and other child welfare professionals. CPRS also enables the uploading and e-filing of court orders, which all special assistant attorneys general (SAAGs) representing DFCS are required to do. CPRS functionality was recently expanded to provide a secure portal for use by Clerks of the Superior Courts to transmit statutorily required adoption orders, pleadings, and other documents to the DFCS Adoption Unit. CPRS has been updated to allow tracking of court compliance with statutory timelines, and that functionality is being tested in several counties. J4C and DFCS are now working together to explore using CPRS to help DFCS comply with its statutory requirement to notify foster parents and relative caregivers of upcoming court hearings.
- Georgia served as a pilot site for the Judicial, Court, and Attorney Measures of Performance (JCAMP) project, which is funded by the federal Children's Bureau through the Capacity Building Center for Courts. Georgia field tested performance measures relevant to statewide child welfare practice through court observations, court file reviews, and participant surveys. J4C has refined the pilot measures to more closely align with Georgia-specific practice and is beginning data collection in three metro counties. Data collected through JCAMP will assist J4C to understand current court practices and identify areas for improvement. JCAMP data will also provide information useful to the Statewide Assessment that DFCS will complete prior to the beginning of Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) in January of 2024.
- The Cold Case Project is a joint project of the J4C Committee and DFCS. Using a computer model, the Project identifies children in foster care whose cases are not moving toward permanency and convenes stakeholders in roundtable meetings to review the substantive due process rights of the children and to brainstorm ways to navigate around roadblocks to permanency. In addition to this case-specific work, J4C is focused on using lessons learned through the Cold Case Project to inform child welfare policy and practice.
- The Court Improvement Initiative (CII) brings together leading juvenile court judges and court teams to review current child welfare data and the latest research on best practices in child welfare cases.
- Georgia now has 66 attorneys and 10 judges who are certified Child Welfare Law Specialists (CWLS). J4C remains focused on the recruitment and retention of CWLSs and is offering financial assistance with application fees as well as annual renewal and recertification fees.
- J4C, DFCS, OCA, and GA CASA held their sixth annual statewide Child Welfare Law Summit on November 30 – December 2, 2022. This Summit offered in-person and virtual attendance options and all presentations remained available to attendees on-demand for 90 days after the Summit ended.
- J4C also sponsors the Justice P. Harris Hines Awards for outstanding advocacy for children in dependency proceedings. Justice Charlie Bethel presented the 2023 Hines Awards at the State Bar Annual Meeting in June 2023 to attorney Dale Austin of the Mountain Judicial Circuit and the late Brenda Ford-Pratt of Tift and Turner County DFCS. Ms. Ford-Pratt's daughter, Shan Rowe, accepted the award on her mother's behalf. Nominations for the 2024 Hines Awards will open in February 2024.



Left: The May 2023 Committee meeting held in the Nathan Deal Judicial Center. **Center:** Justice Bethel and Diana Rugh Johnson gave opening remarks at the sixth annual statewide Child Welfare Law Summit on November 30, 2022. **Right:** Hines Award Winner attorney Dale Austin, Justice Bethel, and Shan Rowe, who accepted the Hines Award on her late mother's behalf at the June State Bar Annual meeting.

GEORGIA CHILD SUPPORT COMMISSION

Staff to Commission: Elaine Johnson, Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, and Latoinna Lawrence

Created by O.C.G.A. § 19-6-50 et seq., staffed by JC/AOC through interagency agreement with DHS

<https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/>

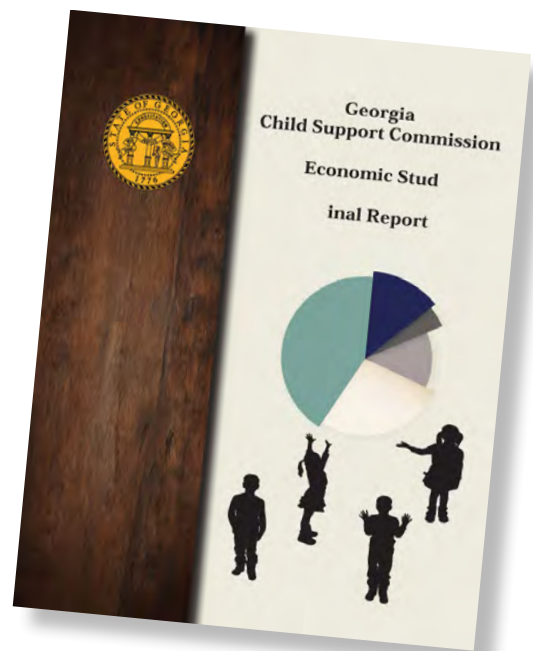
Name	Role	Position
R. Michael Key	Judge, Juvenile Court of Troup County	Chair
Chuck Clay	Attorney	Member
Lisa G. Colbert	Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Member
Kathleen B. Connell	Attorney	Member
Chuck Efstration	State Representative, District 104	Member
Houston Gaines	State Representative, District 120	Member
Emanuel Jones	State Senator, District 10	Member
Lisa Jones	Judge, Juvenile Court, Southwestern Judicial Circuit	Member
Benjamin Land	Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia	Member
Emory Palmer	Judge, Coweta Judicial Circuit, Superior Courts	Member
Regina Quick	General Counsel, Georgia DHS	Member
Christina L. Scott	Attorney	Member
Brian Strickland	State Senator, District 17	Member
Roger C. Tutterow	Economist, Kennesaw State University	Member
Connie L. Williford	Judge, Macon Judicial Circuit, Superior Courts	Member

MISSION:

The Child Support Commission was created by statute for the purpose of collecting information and studying data related to awards of child support and to create and revise the Basic Child Support Obligation Table. To maintain effective and efficient child support guidelines that will serve the best interest of Georgia's children, the Commission conducts comprehensive reviews of the Child Support Guidelines (O.C.G.A. 19-6-15) and economic conditions while bearing in mind the changing dynamics of family life and all other relevant matters. The Child Support Commission is also responsible for developing and maintaining the state's child support calculator and proposing legislation when it deems an amendment to the guidelines statute is necessary. Commission staff offers training to judges, judicial staff, attorneys, mediators, staff of the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS), and the public on the child support guidelines and best practices for using the child support child support calculator; maintains websites for the Child Support Commission and for Georgia's income deduction order process in private child support actions; and coordinates meetings for the Commission in compliance with the Commission's bylaws and the Open Meetings Act.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Commission conducted four meetings during this reporting period on August 19, 2022, September 30, 2022, November 4, 2022, and May 2, 2023. During each of these meetings, reports were made by chairs of the Economic Subcommittee, the Technology and Calculator Subcommittee, and the Statute Review Subcommittee regarding their ongoing work. In addition, the Subcommittees conducted a total of 14 separate meetings during this reporting period. The Commission, through its work completed by the Statute Review Subcommittee and its work with Dr. Jane Venohr, from Center For Policy Research, Inc. (CPR), addressed matters pertaining to the Basic Child Support Obligation Table, parenting time, and low-income parents. The Commission has authorized the preparation of a comprehensive bill for the General Assembly to consider during the 2024 legislative session. The bill will include an update to the Basic Child Support Obligation (BCSO) table, which will be updated for the first time since its 2006 inception. The rationale for updating the table is to account for inflation and price increases since 2006. The bill will also include the creation of a low-income adjustment and a parenting time adjustment.
- Courts, attorneys, mediators, and the public alike use the calculator deployed on August 8, 2016. (The original calculators, web-based and Excel, were initially deployed at the end of December 2006.) Every Excel version of the child support calculator was permanently retired on October 1, 2018. Staff continues providing virtual training to court personnel, attorneys, mediators, DCSS (as requested), and the public on a routine basis. Trainings include, but are not limited to, using the child support calculator generally, the low-income deviation, steps to impute income, and how to avoid common mistakes identified in the 2022 case sampling. Online training is going well, and all sessions (at least once a month) have been very well attended. Staff has prepared training videos for parents (self-represented litigants) that are available on demand on the Child Support Commission website at this link <https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/training/>. We find that many people, including lawyers and their staff, access these videos as well. Staff is currently working with the Division of Child Support Services to create an on-line training video for their staff.
- The work of the Georgia Child Support Commission is available to the public and can be found at <https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/>. The Commission offers for use a child support calculator based on Georgia's child support guidelines statute, O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15. The calculator may be accessed by visiting <https://csconlinecalc.georgiacourts.gov/frontend/web/index.php>. The calculator is supported, and security is maintained by the Judicial Council, Administrative Office of the Courts, Information Technology Division. The agency also offers a website for information on Georgia's private Income Deduction Order process at <https://georgiacourts.gov/ido/>.
- Staff worked with Andres Bosque, of the JC/AOC Research Division, and conducted an evaluation of the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) Parental Accountability Courts (PAC), during 2023. The PAC is a collaborative effort by judges in the state and the DCSS to address barriers faced by many noncustodial parents that prevent the consistent payment of child support. The courts included in this evaluation were from the Atlanta Judicial Circuit, the Dublin Judicial Circuit, the Gwinnett Judicial Circuit, the Mountain Judicial Circuit, the Pataula Judicial Circuit, and the Rockdale Judicial Circuit. The Parental Accountability Courts continue to show great progress in improving the consistency of child support payments.



The 2022 Georgia Child Support Commission Economic Study Final Report

INSTITUTE OF CONTINUING JUDICIAL EDUCATION

Lynne Moore Nelson, Executive Director

Established by Order of the Supreme Court of Georgia

<https://icje.law.uga.edu>



Name	Role	Representing	Term Ends
Judge William P. Bartles	Chair	Juvenile Courts	June 30, 2025
Dean Peter “Bo” Rutledge	Vice-Chair	University of Georgia School of Law	N/A – Ex Officio
Kyemeshia T. Gibson	Secretary/Treasurer	Superior Court Clerks	June 30, 2025
Judge Katherine “Katie” Lumsden	Immediate Past Chair	Superior Courts	N/A – Immediate Past Chair
Justice Verda M. Colvin	Liaison Member	Supreme Court of Georgia	N/A Liaison Member
Dean Mary Anne Bobinski	Board Member	Emory University School of Law	N/A – Ex Officio
Judge Alison T. Burleson	Board Member	Superior Courts	June 30, 2024
Cynthia H. Clanton, Director	Board Member	Judicial Council of Georgia	N/A – Ex Officio
Dean Jace Gatewood	Board Member	Atlanta’s John Marshall School of Law	N/A – Ex Officio
Judge Elizabeth Gobeil	Board Member	Court of Appeals of Georgia	June 30, 2025
Judge Megan Kinsey	Board Member	Magistrate Courts	June 30, 2024
Brad Marsh	Board Member	State Bar of Georgia	June 30, 2024
Judge Matthew McCord	Board Member	Municipal Courts	June 30, 2024
Judge A. Gregory Poole	Board Member	Superior Courts	June 30, 2025
Judge Detria Carter Powell	Board Member	Probate Courts	June 30, 2025
Dean LaVonda Reed	Board Member	Georgia State University School of Law	N/A – Ex Officio
Judge Allison Barnes Salter	Board Member	State Courts	June 30, 2025
Dean Karen J. Sneddon	Board Member	Mercer University School of Law	N/A – Ex Officio

MISSION:

The Institute of Continuing Judicial Education of Georgia (“ICJE”), established in 1978 by Order of the Supreme Court of Georgia, provides continued education and training since its founding and is a professional education consortium of the Georgia Judicial Branch, the State Bar of Georgia, and Georgia’s ABA-accredited law schools: Emory University School of Law; Georgia State University College of Law; Mercer University School of Law; the University of Georgia School of Law; and, Atlanta’s John Marshall Law School. ICJE’s mission is to provide professional development and judicial information services to Georgia judges and court personnel so they are equipped to provide timely, fair, and impartial court services to the public.

ICJE at a GLANCE

Class of Courts Served	15 – ICJE serves Georgia’s trial-level classes of court and international judges
No. of Learners Served	4,723 learners received 713 hours of continued education for a total of 67,694 continuing educational units
Trainings Delivered	50 trainings delivered • 32 in-person synchronous trainings • 10 online synchronous trainings • 3 attendance resource supports • 5 asynchronous taped replay trainings • 112 days of training and supports provided
Days of Training	ICJE provided 112 days of programming which represented 45% of the business days in 2023 scheduled training
ICJE Operations	ICJE has a modest staff of 8 dedicated professionals tasked with supporting over 4,000 learners at a ratio of 1 staff member per 590 constituents

HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, the Institute of Continuing Judicial Education of Georgia commemorated its 45th year serving Georgia judges and court personnel by continuing to provide relevant and impactful training services. With the lessening of COVID restrictions, ICJE resumed its focus on in-person and synchronous programming with 45 trainings and 5 asynchronous trainings. A notable programming accomplishment was the year's record enrollment. In calendar year 2023, we served 15 classes of court by delivering 713 hours of training to 4,723 people for a total of 67,694 continuing educational units which is an 8% increase from last year's training data. Another programming accomplishment was the introduction of sessions addressing transformative societal topics of great importance to the judiciary such as –

- Artificial Intelligence and Legal Ethics
- The Georgia Commission on Family Violence, Domestic Violence Training
- Human Trafficking Awareness
- Judicial Ethics in the Age of Social Media
- Mindfulness and Stress Management for Judges
- Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Judicial Branch

We also recognized the value of self-paced training outside the classroom by adding robust curriculum presentations and password-protected videos on our website. The website's online curriculum is offered for ease of access and is not eligible for continuing judicial credit. In addition to leading several in-person Ethics trainings, the Judicial Qualifications Commission of Georgia collaborated with ICJE to create six online curriculum modules for ICJE learners to reference outside of the classroom.

Under the direction of its Board of Trustees, ICJE initiated several collaborations to enhance our instructional pool and standardize new judges' orientation across each class of court. Collaborating with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, ICJE provided a two-day "Train the Trainer" development workshop to strengthen the pedagogical methods of our volunteer instructors while encouraging a new corp of instructors for ICJE training. The participants included three judges from each class of court served by ICJE along with three

staff members from the Administrative Office of the Courts. The workshop received rave reviews and some of the newly trained instructors have already delivered training.

The New Judges' Orientation stakeholder meetings were convened by ICJE to discuss standardizing NJO options across all classes of court. In the end, common training topics ranging from Ethics, Finding Your Voice as a Judge, and Courtroom Management were adopted. More importantly, connections among different classes of court were established with the goal of members continuing to serve as resources and mentors to each other.

We are looking forward to continued success.

Next year's improvements include the introduction of our new online registration software made possible by the State restoring ICJE's operational funding in FY23. With the restoration of our operational funding, the Shared Office Overhead Allocation which charged each class of court a portion of ICJE's administrative costs, was suspended for FY2024. We are grateful to the Judicial Council, AOC, legislators, and the Governor for funding the restoration. The online registration system allows learners to register for their conferences, make online payments, or create an invoice to send with a paper check and check their training hours at any time.

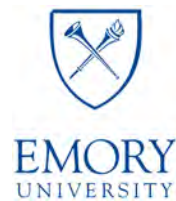
Next year will also be the debut of the Judges' Training Academy which will offer in-depth training by Superior Court Judge Wade Padgett, former Judge Tain Kell, and other experienced judicial instructors on common NJO topics like Evidence. The one-day in-person training will be a multi-class of court offering.

The success that ICJE has experienced over the last 45 years would not be possible without the support of its dedicated staff, Board of Trustees, the Supreme Court of Georgia, the classes of court we serve along with their Council educational apparatus committees, Georgia's law schools, ICJE's corp of volunteer instructors, the Administrative Office of the Courts and friends – all of whom are committed to advancing our mission of premier judicial education providers focused on innovative, transformative, and customized programming offerings that ensure justice for all!



Left to right: **Superior Court Judges' Winter Conference**, UGA Center of Continuing Education, Athens, GA; **2023 ICJE Train the Trainer Class**, UGA Center for Continuing Education, Athens; **Juvenile Court Clerks' Spring Conference Class**, Legacy Lodge, Lake Lanier; and the **Municipal Court Judges' Spring Conference, 20-Hour Certification, Law & Practice Update**, Jekyll Island Convention Center

THANKS TO OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:



Reports from Appellate Courts and Trial Court Councils

Fiscal year 2023 was another busy and productive year for the Supreme Court of Georgia. Under Chief Justice Michael P. Boggs's first year of leadership, the Court handled its steady workload while also diligently reviewing and revising the Supreme Court rules.

Chief Justice Boggs delivered his first State of the Judiciary address to the Georgia General Assembly in March 2023, highlighting the innovative solutions employed by judges across the state to address critical case backlogs and improve the administration of justice, as well as elevating the pressing need for lawyers in rural areas of Georgia where citizens are often denied effective justice due to the unavailability of lawyers.

The Court also continued its important tradition of making the people's business more accessible by holding off-site oral arguments at various locations around the state.

REMOTE SESSIONS

All nine Justices sat for oral arguments on Oct. 6, 2022, in two cases at the Augusta-Richmond County Municipal Building. The Court's longstanding practice of holding remote arguments at least twice a year, which had been halted during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, is meant to give more of Georgia's citizens the opportunity to observe the work of the Court and to stay informed about the Court's role in upholding the rule of law. The Augusta special session followed two days of oral arguments at the Nathan Deal Judicial Center.

Next, the Court held remote oral arguments at Atlanta's John Marshall Law School on Aug. 22, 2023. The Court endeavors to hold at least one of its annual remote sessions at one of Georgia's five law schools, and the last time the Court convened at John Marshall was in April 2009.

The Court also made its first visit to the Waycross Judicial Circuit, holding oral arguments at Pierce County High School on Oct. 26, 2023. In addition to the arguments in two cases, the Justices participated in an educational Q&A session with students, giving young people the opportunity to learn more about the state's judicial branch.



The Supreme Court holding oral arguments in Blackshear (left) and after its remote session in Augusta (right).

BY THE NUMBERS

Ever mindful of its Latin motto that hangs above the bench—"Fiat Justitia Ruat Caelum," or "Let Justice Be Done Though the Heavens Fall"—the Court effectuated 1,218 dispositions between July 2022 and June 2023. The Court also issued 245 published opinions that decided more than 340 cases—individual and consolidated appeals, lawyer and judicial disciplinary matters, etc.

During fiscal year 2023, the Court saw a steady stream of incoming matters, taking in 1,134 new cases in which all Justices participate, with 388 being petitions for certiorari and 275 being direct or cross-appeals. While the numbers may be down slightly from pre-pandemic years, the Court views its intake as a trailing indicator of COVID-19's impact on state courts and fully anticipates a forthcoming wave of cases now that trial courts have reemerged from the constraints of the pandemic and implemented strategies to move through their backlogs.

The Court heard oral arguments in more than 70 cases in fiscal year 2023, which is consistent with previous years.

UPDATED RULES

The Court approved comprehensive revisions of its rules governing Court operations, filings, and other administrative aspects to ensure more efficient and accessible operations. The revisions also sought to modernize the Court's rules to give parties who may interact with the Court more helpful and practical guidance.

Among the more substantial changes to the rules, which went into effect on Jan. 1, 2024, are those addressing pro—or unrepresented filers—and allowing them to use the Court's electronic filing system.

Another notable revision created a new admission process for military spouses who already are licensed to practice law in a state other than Georgia. Under this new rule, the lawyer-spouse of an active-duty service member who is currently assigned to a post in Georgia may obtain a provisional license to practice law in Georgia under certain conditions without having to sit for the Georgia bar exam. This effort is the result of the Court's ongoing review of the Georgia Lawyer Competency Task Force's final report, which was submitted to the Court in the spring of 2023.

The Court also adopted a comprehensive update to the Rules for the Use of Interpreters for Non-English Speaking and Hearing Impaired Persons, which stemmed from the work of the Judicial Council of Georgia's Standing Committee on Court Interpreters led by Justice Carla Wong McMillian and City of Suwanee Municipal Court Judge Norman Cuadra. These amended rules established licens-



Front row (L to R): Justice Charlie Bethel, Presiding Justice Nels S.D. Peterson, Chief Justice Michael P. Boggs, and Justice Sarah Hawkins Warren
Second row (L to R): Justices Verda M. Colvin, Carla Wong McMillian, John J. Ellington, Shawn Ellen LaGrua, and Andrew A. Pinson

ing programs and minimum requirements and procedures for qualifying interpreters, which aim to increase access to justice in Georgia, particularly among non-native English speakers or those who are hearing impaired. These new rules also went into effect on Jan. 1, 2024.

CELEBRATIONS OF SERVICE

On March 28, 2023, the Court unveiled the portrait of former Chief Justice Robert Benham, who was the first African-American Justice to serve on the state's highest court. Justice Benham previously served on the Court of Appeals of Georgia for five years, before being appointed by then-Gov. Joe Frank Harris to the Supreme Court in 1989. He retired from the bench in March 2020.

The Court bid farewell to Jean Ruskell, who retired as Reporter of Decisions for both state appellate courts, in November 2022, presenting her with its *Amicus Curiae* award for her exceptional service. The Court later welcomed Lindsay Rehberg into the role. She had previously served as the Assistant Reporter of Decisions since April 2016.

WHAT'S AHEAD

The Court's Public Information Office has facilitated tours for numerous K-12 school and college classes, leadership groups, law practices, public officials, and service organizations each year since the tour program resumed in January 2022. Building upon the success of its tour program and its remote special sessions, the Court looks forward to more engagement opportunities in civics education. (More

information about tours may be found on the Court's website at gasupreme.us.)

The Court is currently undergoing a comprehensive upgrade to enhance the efficiency of the code governing the docket and the efile system. This upgrade aims to protect the system against malicious attacks. The implementation of the new code will not only bolster security but also introduce increased flexibility for integrating substantial enhancements into the docket and efile systems, which will elevate the overall user experience significantly.



Top row: Justice Benham's portrait ceremony.

Bottom row: Justice Warren with the Atlanta Boy Scouts Scorpion Troup and Justice LaGrua with a group from Alpharetta High School during tours facilitated by the Court's PIO office.

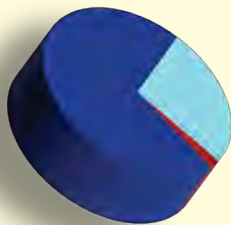
MISSION

Sitting in five three-judge panels, the Court of Appeals handles the majority of appeals in Georgia. The court is responsible for assuring that the rule of law applies equally to all appeals and that they are resolved correctly and promptly. As an appellate court with statewide jurisdiction, the Court of Appeals shares responsibility with the Supreme Court for producing a clear and consistent body of case law that can be relied upon throughout the state.

FY 2023 COURT OF APPEALS BY THE NUMBERS

More than **71 written opinions** per Judge.

Each Judge was assigned more than **118 direct appeals** and reviewed more than **235 additional appeals** assigned to other judges.



2,502 New Cases

1,782 Direct Appeals
665 Applications to Appeal
55 Emergency Motions

OFFSITE ORAL ARGUMENTS

In FY2023, the Court of Appeals continued its program of outreach to Georgia citizens with six offsite oral argument sessions. In addition to traveling to Mercer University and the University of Georgia, judges also held court in these locations:

Mercer University School of Law, September 7, 2022

Presiding Judge Stephen Louis A. Dillard

Judge Amanda H. Mercier

Judge Todd Markle

University of Georgia School of Law, September 28, 2022

Presiding Judge Christopher J. McFadden

Judge Elizabeth Gobeil

Judge Benjamin A. Land

Valdosta State University, October 10, 2022

Presiding Judge Anne Elizabeth Barnes

Judge Trenton Brown

Judge Kenneth B. Hodges, III

Coffee County High School, February 8, 2023

Presiding Judge Christopher J. McFadden

Judge Trenton Brown

Judge Todd Markle

Tallulah Falls School, March 28, 2023

Presiding Judge Stephen Louis A. Dillard

Judge Brian M. Rickman

Judge John A. "Trea" Pipkin, III

Columbus RiverCenter, April 12, 2023

Presiding Judge Anne Elizabeth Barnes

Judge Brian M. Rickman

Judge Benjamin A. Land



Left: Coffee County High School students and teachers welcomed Presiding Judge McFadden, Judge Brown, and Judge Markle, who heard oral arguments there in February 2023.

Middle and right: In October 2022, Presiding Judge Barnes, Judge Brown, and Judge Hodges heard oral arguments at Valdosta State University, followed by a visit to VSU's Copeland African American Museum.





COURT OF APPEALS OF GEORGIA 2023-2024

FIRST ROW, L TO R:

Christopher J. McFadden, Presiding Judge
 Sara L. Doyle, Presiding Judge
 Anne Elizabeth Barnes, Presiding Judge
 Amanda H. Mercier, Chief Judge
 M. Yvette Miller, Presiding Judge
 Stephen Louis A. Dillard, Presiding Judge
 Brian M. Rickman, Judge

SECOND ROW, L TO R:

Jeffrey A. Watkins, Judge
 Trea Pipkin, Judge
 Todd Markle, Judge
 Trenton Brown, Vice Chief Judge
 Elizabeth D. Gobeil, Judge
 Kenneth B. Hodges III, Judge
 Benjamin A. Land, Judge
 C. Andrew Fuller, Senior Judge

APPOINTMENTS

Governor Brian Kemp appointed former Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Watkins to the Court of Appeals in May 2023.

Senior Appellate Judge C. Andrew Fuller was appointed to court of appeals to assist during a temporary vacancy.



Left: Judge Jeffrey Watkins next to his family while being sworn in to the Court by Governor Brian Kemp.



Right: Senior Appellate Judge C. Andrew Fuller was sworn in by Chief Judge Amanda H. Mercier and Vice Chief Judge Trenton Brown to assist the Court during a temporary vacancy.

THE PASSING OF JUDGE CLYDE L. REESE

The Court of Appeals judges and staff mourned the unexpected passing in December 2022 of Judge Clyde L. Reese, who had served on the court since 2016. Judge Reese was greatly admired for his wisdom and grace, and has been deeply missed.



GEORGIA STATE-WIDE BUSINESS COURT

<https://www.georgiabusinesscourt.com/>

MISSION

To lower costs, improve the efficiency of all courts, and promote predictability of judicial outcomes in certain complex business disputes for the benefit of all citizens of this state.

OVERVIEW

The State-wide Business Court has jurisdiction over claims involving the Uniform Commercial Code, the Georgia Uniform Securities Act, the Georgia Business Corporation Code, Georgia Trade Securities Act, and other business disputes. The court also has supplemental jurisdiction over all related pending claims. Absent equity jurisdiction, the court's jurisdiction is limited to claims greater than \$500,000—except for commercial real estate, which will be limited to claims greater than \$1 million. The cost to file a case in the court is \$3,000. For the same fee, qualifying cases may be transferred from state courts to the court with the consent of the parties.

BY THE NUMBERS

The numbers below reflect the State-Wide Business Courts docket since it began accepting cases on August 1, 2020 through Fiscal Year 2023 (June 30, 2023).

- 88 Cases have been filed
- 38 Cases disposed of with an average disposition time of 199 days.
- 27 Cases have been settled.
- 680 Orders issued.
- 8 Days average wait time for an order on a ripe motion/request.
- 77 Hearings have been held.
- Two jury trials have been held.
- Seven cases stayed as of June 30, 2023.
- 85 Case conferences have been conducted.
- 46 Pro hac vice applications have been granted.



Judge William "Bill" Hamrick III was sworn in as Judge to the Georgia State-Wide Business Court of September 26, 2022.

COUNCIL OF SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES

Executive Director: Shannon Weathers

<https://georgiasuperiorcourts.org/>

Leadership

President

Judge John E. Morse, Jr., Eastern Judicial Circuit

President-Elect

Judge Ann B. Harris, Cobb Judicial Circuit

Secretary Treasurer

Judge Robert W. Guy, Jr., Brunswick Judicial Circuit

Immediate Past-President

Judge Arthur Lee Smith III, Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit

MISSION:

The Council of Superior Court Judges' mission is to provide leadership and support to preserve the ability of the Courts to meet their constitutional and statutory responsibilities and further the administration of justice while functioning as a liaison with other courts and the other two branches of Government.

The Council provides payroll and travel reimbursements; budget administration and accounting; leave entry, benefit coordination, and other human resources needs for all judges and their state-paid staff; and management of all superior court statewide accounting functions.

The Council also provides legal support for required publications such as the Uniform Rules for Superior Courts and Pattern Jury Instructions; statewide legal support for judges handling death penalty habeas corpus cases; logistics for seminars and meetings; and numerous other critical statewide functions for superior courts.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The Council is grateful to the General Assembly for funding a sixth step to the pay plan for state-paid judicial secretaries, increasing the travel and expense allowance for court reporters, providing the pay increase for all full-time state employees including Superior Court Judges, and adding three new judgeships in the Atlantic Judicial Circuit, the Coweta Judicial Circuit, and the Dougherty Judicial Circuit. The Council thanks the judges of its Legislative Support Team chaired by Judge Bert Guy and Director of External Affairs Debra Nesbit for their work during the legislative session. The Council is also grateful to Governor Brian Kemp for providing federal ARPA funding to the judiciary which has assisted our judges in the performance of their duties as Georgia has emerged from the pandemic.

New Judges' Orientation: Judge Wade Padgett and former Judge LaTain Kell have trained the majority of the active superior court judges through the New Judges' Orientation program. The goal is to prepare new judges for success as they take the bench. Criminal topics include pretrial issues, presentation of evidence, submitting the case to the jury, sentencing, merger, and motions for new trial. Civil topics include domestic relations, pretrial

motions, discovery disputes, attorney fees, verdict, and post-trial issues. Other topics include contempt, recusal, and the Judicial Qualifications Commission. Judge Padgett and former Judge Kell also co-host the free "Good Judge-ment" podcast, which covers educational discussions relevant to the judiciary and legal system.

Emory Findley Award: Each year, the Council recognizes deserving judges with the Emory Findley Award. The award, named after the late Judge Emory Findley, recognizes judges for their outstanding leadership and dedication to the continued improvement of our court system. This year's recipient was Senior Judge Frank C. Mills, III, of the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit. Judge Mills was the longtime chairman of the Pattern Jury Instructions Committee. He worked tirelessly on behalf of his fellow judges and attorneys by drafting and revising jury charges based upon changes in the law. The Council is sad to report that Judge Mills died in February of this year.

Pattern Jury Instructions: The Council continues the process of rewriting many of the suggested pattern jury instructions in plain English. This initiative is intended to better assist judges in the instruction of jurors by promoting a clear and concise presentation of the law to citizens serving on a jury. The most recent published plain language criminal charges include drug offenses, vehicular homicide, and firearms offenses. The Council will soon publish plain language charges for cruelty to children, terroristic threats or acts, obstruction, reckless conduct, false imprisonment, and kidnapping.

Uniform Rules Committee: The CSCJ Uniform Rules Committee worked with the Department of Corrections (DOC) to create a new required Court Production Order form for state inmates. The committee also worked with a subcommittee of the Judicial Council Court Technology Committee to create a new Uniform Rule 22.1 (Audiovisual Media Use in Trials) regarding standard formatting of audiovisual evidence introduced at trial. Both the new form and rule were approved by the Council and subsequently, the Supreme Court.



Left, L to R: Judge John Morse, Jr., Georgia Parole Board member Meg Heap, Judge Ann B. Harris, Speaker of the House of Representatives Jon Burns, Judge Bert Guy, and Judge Michael Muldrew.

Right: Senior Judge Frank C. Mills, III, the recipient of the Council's Emory Findley Award.

COUNCIL OF STATE COURT JUDGES

Executive Director: Bob Bray

<https://georgiacourts.gov/statecourt/>

Leadership

President

Judge R. Violet Bennett, Wayne County

President-Elect

Judge John K. Edwards, Jr., Lowndes County

Secretary

Judge Jeffrey B. Hanson, Bibb County

Treasurer

Judge Gregory V. Sapp, Chatham County

Immediate Past-President

Judge Alvin T. Wong, DeKalb County

MISSION AND GOALS:

“Impartial Courts - Judicial Excellence - Accessible and Efficient Justice.” The Council consists of 133 State Court active judges, who serve in 73 counties, and 60 Senior Judges and State Court Judges Emeritus. Each year the Council develops a Strategic Business Plan to further its mission toward the improvement of State Courts, the quality and expertise of its judges, to maintain the impartiality of the judiciary and to ensure the fair, efficient administration of justice. The five Strategic Objectives of the Council are to:

1. Support the State Courts
2. Enhance Effectiveness and Continuity of our Council
3. Support the Judiciary as a whole
4. Foster Relationships within the Judiciary and with other branches of government
5. Serve, inform and interact with the public

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The State Court of Paulding County began operation on July 1, 2022. The Council welcomes Judge Angela R. O’Conor as its first Judge.
- The Council held a robust training schedule in FY23. The Fall Conference was held at Callaway Gardens on October 12-14, 2022. Over 100 Judges attended the Conference in-person. Dr. Robert W. Livingston was the featured presenter and taught classes over two days on Promoting Racial Equity using his book *The Conversation* as the focus of the discussions. This year’s Spring Judicial Training Conference was held May 17th – 19th, at the UGA Continuing Education Conference Center in Athens. Over 90 Judges attended the Conference in-person. The Dinner Banquet Speech was given by the

incoming President of the State Bar, J. Antonio DelCampo and an alumni of our Council. The Judges also heard from Chief Justice Michael P. Boggs who administered the oath of office to incoming President John Kent Edwards, Jr.

- Judge Pamela D. South of the State Court of Gwinnett County was presented the Ogden Doremus / Kent Lawrence Award. The award is given to a State Court Judge that has achieved the highest level of respect from his or her peers as being a Judge recognized for their judicial ethics and professionalism on the bench and their involvement in their communities.
- All of our State Courts continue to diligently work to clear the backlog of cases due to the Judicial Emergency. Most have made significant headway in this important endeavor; and a few have even caught up by holding extra criminal and traffic sessions, and by referring civil cases to mediation.
- The Council recognized the exemplary work of our Executive Director, Mr. Bob Bray, who just completed his 20th year with the AOC and Council of State Court Judges and presented him with the first Award to be bestowed each year in his name to an individual that goes above and beyond in providing exceptional service to the Council of State Court Judges.
- Passage of HB 543 provided for a 6-person jury in state court civil cases where the where damages are not greater than \$50,000; increased from \$25,000.



Top row, from left: Judge Pamela South receiving the Ogden Doremus Kent Lawrence Award. Bob Bray received the inaugural exemplary service award from the Council. Worth County, led by Judge Ralph Powell cleared case backlogs by holding court in the Worth County Community Center. **Bottom row:** State Court Judges and civics outreach. Pictured are judges Vi Bennett, Herbert Benson, and Josh Thacker speaking to students about our court system.

COUNCIL OF JUVENILE COURT JUDGES

Executive Director: Eric John

<https://georgiacourts.gov/cjcj/>

Leadership

President

Judge Warner L. Kennon, Sr.,
Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit

President-Elect

Judge T. Neal Brunt, Cherokee Judicial Circuit

Vice-President

Judge Maureen Wood, Rockdale Judicial Circuit

Secretary

Judge Michelle Harrison, Douglas Judicial Circuit

Treasurer

Judge McCracken Poston, Jr.,
Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit

Immediate Past-President

Judge Render M. Heard, Jr., Tifton Judicial Circuit

MISSION:

The Juvenile Courts' mission is to serve the community by assisting children and families in need and to protect the community by administering individual justice and deterring delinquent behavior through the court and community-based services from the Programs arm of the Court and the Department of Juvenile Justice probation services.

VISION:

The Juvenile Courts' vision is to achieve excellence by providing quality services for the positive development of children, the safety of the community and the preservation of the family unit.

The Council of Juvenile Court Judges provides support to the juvenile court judges through legal research services, legislative tracking, and specialized programs to assist in protecting the best interests of children and the state.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The Council of Juvenile Court Judges held its Fall Conference in Athens, GA, October 23 -25, 2023. During the conference, Henry County Juvenile Court Judge Bill Bartles was awarded the Judge Aaron Cohn Award, given each year to a juvenile court judge who has made significant contributions to the Council and/or the field of juvenile justice and child welfare. Judge Bartles is the second longest serving judge on the juvenile court bench having been first appointed in 1986. He was President of the Council in 2002-2003 and is currently

the Chair of the ICJE Board of Trustees. Mr. Jerry Bruce, Child Advocate of the State of Georgia, was presented with the Council's Judge Martha K. Glaze Service Award, given annually to a non-judicial person who has made significant contributions to the Council and/or the field of juvenile justice and child welfare. Mr. Bruce was a juvenile court judge in the Enotah Judicial Circuit from 2011-2015 and has been the Child Advocate since being appointed by Governor Brian Kemp in 2021. The Council congratulates each of these recipients on this well-deserved recognition.

- The CJCJ Legislative Committee and the Executive Committee recently unanimously approved proposed legislation to fold our Juvenile Accountability Courts into the Georgia Council of Accountability Court Judges.
- The Council worked with a task force led by CIP Director Diana Rugh Johnson to modify the state's Court Process Reporting System (CPRS) to better track juvenile court case progress across the state.
- The Council's Spring Conference was held on May 7-10, 2023, in St. Simons. The Spring conference was preceded by a two-day ICJE/CJCJ Education Certification Committee five-year long-range planning meeting.
- The Juvenile Data Exchange (JDEX) initiative centralizes data from juvenile court case management systems and the Department of Juvenile Justice's juvenile tracking system (JTS) on juvenile offenders which provides judges a complete picture of data for juvenile offenders. JDEX was brought online in June 2019. Trainings across the state were held with a shift towards virtual trainings after the onset of the pandemic.
- Justice Case Activity Tracking System (JCATS): Forty-eight (48) counties use this case management system (CMS) that is either JcatsWeb NG or JcatsCourtGA NG in their court. Approximately ninety-four percent (94%) of the delinquent cases in the state are captured by these JCATS CMSs. Since 2015, there has been an increase of 71% of the counties using JCATS.



Above: On May 8, 2023 Judge Warner Kennon is sworn in as Council president by Judge Lisa Jones as his family looked on.

COUNCIL OF PROBATE COURT JUDGES

Executive Director: Kevin Holder

<https://gaprobate.gov/>

Leadership

President

Judge B. Shawn Rhodes Wilcox County

President-Elect

Judge Danielle McRae, Upson County

Vice-President

Judge Christopher Ballar, Gwinnett County

Secretary-Treasurer

Judge Darin McCoy, Evans County

Immediate Past-President

Judge Thomas Lakes, Harris County

MISSION:

Our Council's vision is excellence in the administration of justice in every probate court. Our Council's mission is to advance the common interests of and assist probate courts in fulfilling their responsibilities. Finally, our Council's guiding principles are to ensure that probate courts fulfill their statutory responsibilities, demonstrate integrity, respect the independence and diversity of each court, function collaboratively, continuously improve service to our constituency and engage all Council members.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Developed specialized training for Article 6 elected and associate judges
- Conducted annual dissemination of information during Mental Health Awareness month to remind judges on available resources relative to their wellness
- Created Uniform Rules for remote proceedings
- CPCJ Mental Health Committee developed recommendations to address billing inconsistencies for involuntary commitment hearings
- Debuted Council's stand-alone subscription-based Handbook website
- Recognized by Senate Pro Tempore John F. Kennedy (Senate Resolution 47)
- Created a subcommittee to enhance New Judges' Orientation
- Increased number of courts who have implemented e-filing on a limited basis



Top row, left to right: A Council group photo with Lieutenant Governor Burt Jones at CPCJ's Legislative Day; Probate Judges at 2023 Spring Conference in Athens. **Bottom row, left to right:** Senate Pro Tempore John F. Kennedy presenting a resolution honoring CPCJ; Macon-Bibb County Probate Judge Sarah Harris with Governor Kemp at CPCJ's Legislative Day; Judge Shawn Rhodes at the CPCJ Executive Committee in Savannah; the presentation of the 2023 Legislative Recognition award to Senate Pro Tempore John F. Kennedy; and, Judge Patty Walters Laine presenting Judge Carrie Markham with the Outstanding Probate Judge of the Year award.

COUNCIL OF MAGISTRATE COURT JUDGES

Executive Director: Sharon Reiss

<https://georgiamagistratecouncil.com/>

Leadership

President

Judge Rebecca J. Pitts, Butts County

President-Elect

Judge Brandon T. Bryson, Bartow County

Vice-President

Judge Bobby Wolf, Fulton County

Secretary

Judge Berryl A. Anderson, DeKalb County

Treasurer

Judge Jennifer Lewis, Camden County

Immediate Past-President

Judge Quinn Kasper, Cobb County

MISSION:

Magistrate court, also called small claims court and sometimes the people's court, is an informal court that handles money claims of less than \$15,000. This court offers a quick and inexpensive process to resolve complaints.

The Council of Magistrate Court Judges supports community justice by:

- Improving the magistrate courts and the administration of justice;
- Assisting the chief magistrates, magistrates, and senior magistrates throughout the state in the execution of their duties; and
- Training and promoting chief magistrates, magistrates, and senior magistrates.

Case type examples include: dispossessory; evictions; four types of criminal misdemeanors; probable cause hearings; setting bond and then binding over to other courts, and some fraud cases.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The New Judges 40 Hour Civil Training Session was held August 28th through September 2nd at the UGA Conference Center Hotel in Athens with approximately 26 new Judges in attendance.
- The annual Fall Recertification Conference was held October 3rd & 4th at The Westin Savannah Harbour Resort with approximately 160 Judges in attendance.

- Magistrate Day at the Capitol was held February 1st in conjunction with Probate Day at the Capitol.
- The Council of Magistrate Court Judges (CMCJ) held its 40th Anniversary celebration on April 16th on St. Simons Island. The Georgia House of Representatives passed House Resolution 572 to commemorate the event. The Council recognized all of the past presidents of the Council. The following seven Judges were also recognized for 40 years of continuous service to CMCJ: Chief Judge Melinda Anderson of Liberty County, Chief Judge Rita Cavanaugh of Spalding County, Judge Jerry Day of Walker County, Judge Richard C. Foxworth of DeKalb County, Chief Judge Connie Holt of Morgan County, Chief Judge Lavern Ogletree of Green County and Judge Shelia Thompson of Walker County. A few of these Judges originally served as Justice of the Peace. All of their hard work and dedication to CMCJ is greatly appreciated.
- The Council awarded Judge Megan Kinsey the Magistrate of the Year Award and Judge Michael Barker the Humanitarian Award.



Top: Leadership meeting at the April Recertification. **Middle row, L to R:** Judges Michael Barker and Megan Kinsey receiving their awards. **Magistrate Day at the Capitol.** **Bottom:** Group picture at the Magistrate Day at the Capitol with Governor and First Lady Kemp.

GEORGIA MAGISTRATE COURTS TRAINING COUNCIL

The Georgia Magistrate Courts Training Council, which was created by statute in 1983, consists of six members and oversees the training and certification of Magistrate Judges. O.C.G.A. § 15-10-130 et seq. The Council, chaired by Judge Megan Kinsey (Magistrate Court of Butts County), met twelve times in FY 2023:

- July 13, 2022 – Virtual Meeting
- August 10, 2022 – Virtual Meeting
- September 14, 2022 – Virtual Meeting
- October 12, 2022 – Virtual Meeting
- November 9, 2022 – Virtual Meeting
- January 11, 2023 – In-Person at the Administrative Office of Courts' Ratley Conference Room with zoom option
- February 8, 2023 – Virtual Meeting
- April 16, 2023 – In-Person during the biannual recertification training held on St. Simons Island.
- June 21, 2023 – Virtual Meeting

The Council developed and approved the training curriculum for mandatory annual magistrate training, focusing on several topics including special condition bonds, implicit bias, post-judgment actions, rules of evidence, courthouse and personal security, dispossession, damages, ex parte, behavior on social media, decision making in criminal cases, and case law legislative updates. The Council issued certification to magistrate court judges meeting the annual training requirement for CY 2022.

The Council was assisted by two subcommittees: the Curriculum Committee, which studies and recommends possible training topics to the full Council; and, the Mentor Committee, which oversees the mentoring of new magistrate judges.

The Georgia Magistrate Courts Training Council submits this report pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 15-10-134(e).



Pictures from the Magistrate Court Training Council's busy calendar in FY23

COUNCIL OF MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGES

Trial Court Liaison: LaShawn Murphy
<https://georgiacourts.gov/municipal/>

Leadership

President

Judge JaDawnya Baker, City of Atlanta

President-Elect

Chief Judge Matthew McCord,
City of Stockbridge

Vice President

Judge David Will, City of Clarkston

Secretary

Chief Judge Robert Cowan, City of Dalton

Treasurer

Chief Judge Ryan Hope, Athens-Clarke County

Immediate Past-President

Judge Lori B. Duff, City of Monroe



MISSION AND GOALS:

To set standards and policies, and to provide information and education services to the Municipal Courts of Georgia so they can more efficiently and effectively operate their courts, administer justice, and serve the public.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- As a critical component in assuring continuity in leadership and the yearly development of the CMuCJ, representatives from the Council met July 13-15, 2022 in Dahlonega, Georgia, for a day and a half Leadership meeting. Held annually following the election of new leadership, the meeting's purpose is for the President to share their vision of the upcoming year with officers and key members and to hold discussions regarding any pertinent association initiatives from previous years and those moving forward.
- Chief Judge Ryan Hope, Athens-Clarke County, the Council's treasurer was appointed February 22, 2023 to the State Court of Clarke County, filling a vacancy created by the resignation of the Honorable Ethelyn Simpson.
- CMuCJ's held its first Legislative Day at the Capitol since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The event was held on March 8, 2023, which was also the day of the State of the Judiciary. Attendees had the opportunity to participate in that event as well.
- The Council engaged in the efforts to educate members on the Superior and State Court Appellate Practice Act. The video presentation created detailing HB 916, which became effective July 1, 2023, has been uploaded to the Behind the Bench password protected area of the website with a certificate of completion to request CJE hours in addition to the CLE hours

offered. We also conducted district Lunch & Learns, municipal clerks Lunch & Learns, and judicial plenary sessions with Court of Appeals Presiding Judge Christopher McFadden, Atlanta Municipal Court Judge Gary Jackson, and Darron J. Enns, Assistant General Counsel, Judicial Council/ Administrative Office of the Courts, facilitating the sessions. They proved to be beneficial for both the participants and the speakers.

- The Council's full Executive Committee met September 29, 2022, at the UGA Center for Continuing Education and conducted its Fall Business meeting on this same day. Members also met on June 13, 2023, at the Marriott Courtyard, Jekyll Island, Georgia. The Council also held its annual Summer Business Meeting and Awards & Recognition Ceremony on June 15, 2023, where the Membership approved the FY23-24 Council Budget and received updates on legislative initiatives and proposed Rule changes. Chief Justice Harold Melton (Retired), Supreme Court of Georgia attended the Business Meeting as the Council's guest speaker and administered the oath of office to the newly elected officers.

HONORS:

The Council recognized a number of municipal court judges, legislators, and council staff with accolades for various achievements.

- Judge Douglas G. Andrews, Municipal Court of Guyton, received the Frost Ward Lifetime Achievement Award, which recognizes a municipal court judge who has made significant contributions to the Council of Municipal Court Judges over a long period of time.
- Judge Michael M. Hawkins, Municipal Court of Dunwoody and Judge Rick Ryczek, Municipal Courts of Snellville and Suwanee, were recognized with the Glen Ashman Education Achievement Award which honors judges that exemplify judicial education through extensive time and efforts towards educating municipal court judges and clerks.



Legislative Day at the Capitol: On March 8, 2023, CMuCJ's held its first Legislative Day since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

HONORS *continued*

- Chief Judge Robert Cowan, Rome Municipal Court, and Chief Judge Harvey Luke Mayes IV, Municipal Courts of Acworth and Kennesaw, were awarded the Special Recognition Award for their excellent representation and efforts as District Representatives.
- The Council's President's Award, on behalf of Judge JaDawn-ya Baker, was awarded to Chief Judge Ronald Freeman, Municipal Courts of Forest Park and Union City, for his brilliant counsel and support in the progression of the council.
- Chief Judge Matthew McCord, Municipal Court of Stockbridge, for his unceasing efforts to ensure the advancement of the council.
- Chief Judge Rashida Oliver, Municipal Court of East Point, for her consistent efforts and contributions in progressing the council.
- Chief Judge Margaret Washburn, Municipal Court of Sugar Hill, for her consistent efforts and contributions in progressing the council
- Cynthia H. Clanton, Director, Administrative Office of the Courts, for her leadership & being a pillar of support to the council.
- Cheryl Karounos, Governmental Affairs Liaison and Tracy Mason, Sr. Assistant Director, Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts for their outstanding service & support of the council.
- The Council recognized Representative Rob Leverett (House District 33) and Senator John Kennedy (Senate District 18) for their continued efforts in the General Assembly on the Petition for Review clean-up.

GEORGIA MUNICIPAL COURTS TRAINING COUNCIL

The Georgia Municipal Courts Training Council, created in statute per O.C.G.A. § 36-32-22, consists of six members and oversees the training and certification of municipal court judges and chief clerks. The Council, chaired by Chief Judge Matthew McCord (Municipal Courts of Stockbridge and Hampton), met four times in FY 2023:

- November 21, 2022 – Via Zoom
- December 20, 2022 – Via Zoom
- April 14, 2023 – Via Zoom
- June 13, 2023 – (Hybrid) Via Zoom and In Person, Jekyll Island, GA

The other members of the Training Council included: Chief Judge Norman Cuadra, Vice-Chair; Ms. Cynthia Clanton, Council Secretary & AOC Director; Judge Lori Duff; Chief Judge Rashida Oliver and Judge Rick Ryczek. Chief Judge Rashida Oliver also served as the Institute of Continuing Judicial Education Board representative from the Council.

The first half of the fiscal year's training was a duplicate of the CY22 Law & Practice Update. In the second half, the Council developed and approved a robust training curriculum for mandatory new judges' orientation and annual municipal court judges' training. A New Judge Orientation (NJO) Track for Municipal Court Judges was offered in March 2023 via Zoom and again in conjunction with the in-person 20-Hour Certification Law & Practice Update scheduled for June 14-16, 2023. The NJO track included an Introduction to the Municipal Court Benchbook, overview of the Municipal Court Uniform Rules and a segment called Practical Procedures and the Fundamentals in Municipal Court. This segment included sessions on Interpreters, Probation Revocation, How to Handle Plea Agreements, a panel on Special Issues, and Judicial Demeanor. The curriculum for the Law and Practice Update included plenary sessions on Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Resources and Messaging - Municipal Courts; Legislative Update on the 2023 session; HB 916 "The Petition

for Review"; When Justice Fails; Judicial Attitude & Ethics, and updates on DUI Law, the Interpreters Rules, and from the Department of Driver Services (DDS). These sessions were in addition to a wellness track.

Municipal court judges were offered the opportunity to participate in Zoom conferences on the following topics during FY23: Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Judicial Branch, Legal Writing: Striving for Clarity, The Georgia Commission on Family Violence Training, Human Trafficking Awareness, Recognizing Unconscious Bias, and Mindfulness and Stress Management for Judges. The Council issued certification to municipal court judges meeting the annual training requirement for CY 2022.

Per statutory requirement, the Council also oversaw the training and certification of chief municipal court clerks and allows the Georgia Municipal Court Clerks Council (GMCCC) to work with ICJE in the planning of the curriculum(s). Like the judges, the first half of the fiscal year's training was a duplicate of the CY22 curriculum. In the second half, Clerks were offered three 12-Hour Recertifications and three 8-Hour Live Virtual Events; the training mandate is eight hours annually. Two In-Person 16-Hour certification seminars were provided for newly appointed chief clerks. The training curriculum for chief clerks focused on such topics as Municipal Court Uniform Rules; Sovereign Citizens; Fines and Fees; Ethics for Clerks; GMCCC/AOC panel; Legislative Update; Succession Planning & Delegation; and updates from DDS and the Georgia Crime Information Center. The Council issued certification to chief municipal court clerks meeting the annual training requirement for CY 2022.

The Georgia Municipal Courts Training Council submits this report pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 36-32-24



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